Pink Cherry Blossom Scans
Presents:

# Shizuku HanaBira Ringo no Kaori

By: Kawai Touko

## Volume 2

Credits:
Editor: Yecenia
Raws: Sakura
Cleaner: Yecenia
Quality check: Yecenia

Visit us at:
pinkcherryblossom.wordpress.com

# The Scent of Apple Blossoms

HARUNA, THE SAUCE!
THE SAUCE? WHERE IS IT?
OH, HERE IT IS!
The Scent of Apple Blossoms
YAY
HOW'S YOUR PORK CUTLET, MUC-CHAN?
YAY
GRANDPA! DON'T YOU THINK YOU'RE PUTTING TOO MUCH SAUCE ON THAT?
I love tonkatsu! It's a national treasure!
IT'S GREAT! THE MEAT IS FANTASTIC!
MUNCH
Sheesh!
NOPE.
MUNCH MUNCH
ISN'T IT? IT'S A KIND OF PORK CALLED HAKKIN.
The client who gave it to us said it was good stuff.
...
SLOP SLOP
HEE-HEE
YOUR GRANDPARENTS SENT US MORE RICE THIS YEAR!
I sent them some sake to thank them!
...like he lives here!
Eating dinner at my house...
HEE-HEE
HARUNA! SECONDS!
SURE THING. HOW ABOUT YOU, MUC-CHAN?
YES, PLEASE!
This rice is so tasty!

SORRY... I'M NOT CRAZY ABOUT TOMATOES.
OH, REALLY?
YEAH...
THESE TOMATOES ARE FROM OUR NEIGHBORS' GARDEN.
MUCCHAN, YOU SHOULD HAVE SOME SALAD TOO.
SCOOP SCOOP
GRANDPA, YOU CAN'T JUST EAT MEAT. TAKE SOME VEGETABLES!
HRMPH...
I don't like 'em.
CHOMP
...
...WITH NO DRESSING.
HMPH
WELL, AT LEAST HAVE SOME LETTUCE!
OH, OKAY...
BUT LETTUCE ALONE...
No lettuce alone! Ha ha...
You don't put anything on it?
Here.
FIDGET
FIDGET

The Scent of
Apple Blossoms

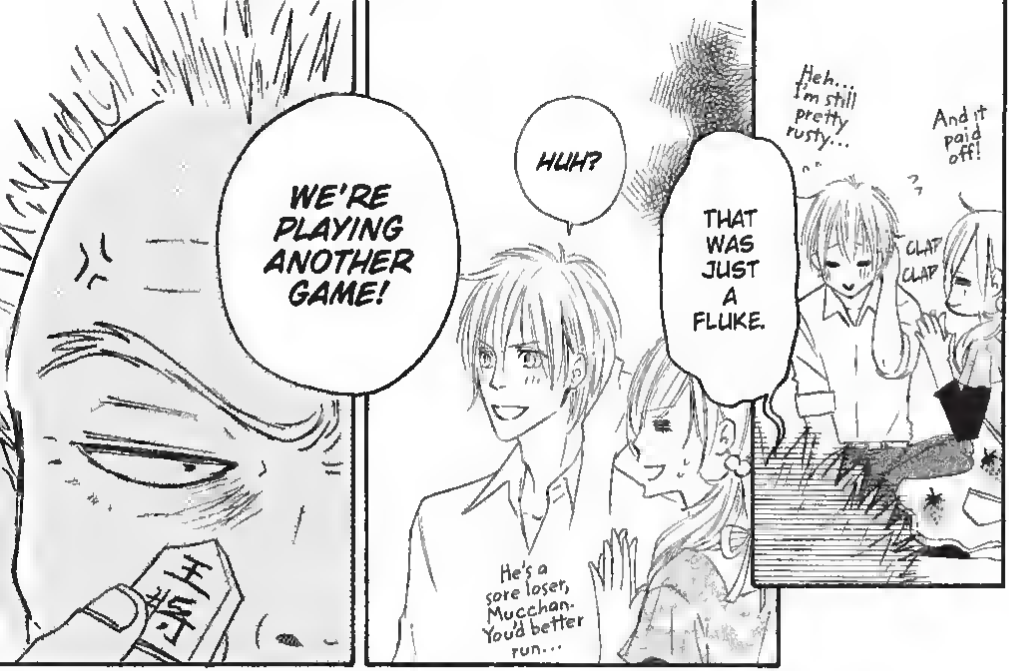
SORRY, MUCCHAN. GUESTS SHOULDN'T HAVE TO CLEAN UP.
IT'S FINE! YOU DID FEED ME, AFTER ALL.
JUST LET ME KNOW IF THERE'S ANYTHING ELSE I CAN HELP WITH.
OH NO, I COULDN'T!
BUT SINCE YOU MENTIONED IT...
...COULD YOU HELP ME TAKE THIS SAKE OUT TO GRANDPA?
WHAT? HE'S HAVING MORE?
I KNOW, RIGHT? HE DRINKS WAY TOO MUCH!
JUST CARRY THIS BOTTLE, OKAY?
OKAY.
I'll be out in a minute with his snack.
角行
CLACK
歩兵
MM...
I BROUGHT YOU SOME SAKE, SIR.
HARUNA-CHAN'S MAKING YOU A SNACK.
CLACK

A SHOGI TOURNA-MENT!
I'M NOT GONNA LOSE!
HE'S PRACTICING FOR THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY'S SHOGI TOURNAMENT NEXT WEEK.
What a nice board!
WOW! SHOGI!
SIR, YOU PLAY SHOGI?
HRM...

IT LOOKED LIKE HE'D BE A WHILE. I DON'T THINK HE'LL BE ABLE TO PLAY WITH YOU TODAY.
HARUNA, WHERE'S SHU?
FILING SOME TRICKY-LOOKING PAPERWORK.
WHEN WILL HE BE DONE?
HMPH.

THIS ISN'T MAWARI-SHOGI, YOU KNOW.
WHAT? MUCCHAN, YOU KNOW HOW TO PLAY SHOGI?
I CAN PLAY REAL SHOGI!
YEAH, MORE OR LESS.
UM...
Well, that's no fun...
...I'LL PLAY WITH YOU IF YOU LIKE.

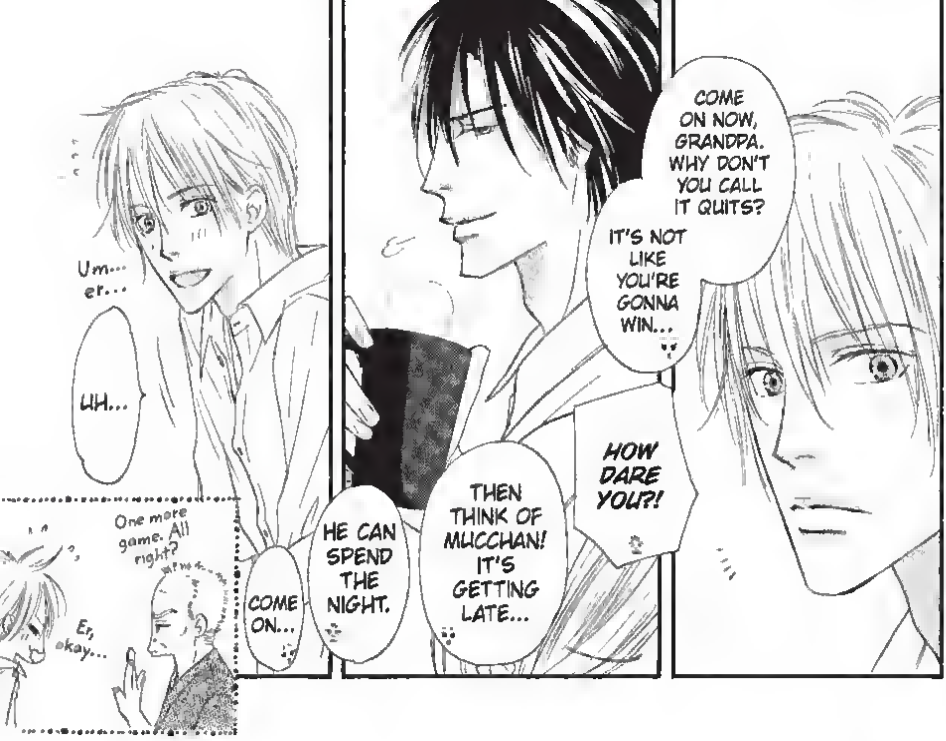
TWO STARES OF DISBELIEF
Can this foreign kid really play?
He sure doesn't seem like the type
I dunno...
...
...
HEY, GIMME A BREAK! DOESN'T ANYONE BELIEVE IN ME?
I MAY NOT BE THE INTELLECTUAL TYPE, BUT I PLAY FROM TIME TO TIME!
WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, SIR, IT'S ON!
CHIRP
CHIRP
I WON'T LET A YOUNG PUNK BEAT ME!
Not too shabby!
Wow! Instant death!
WHOOOA
!!
!!
CLACK
FEAST YOUR EYES!
CHECK!
BACK IN L.A., I DID A LOT OF STUFF TO GET IN TOUCH WITH MY JAPANESE HERITAGE...
...AND I REALLY GOT INTO SHOGI.
That was amazing!
CLAP
CLAP
WOW, MUCCHAN! YOU'RE REALLY GOOD!


WE'RE PLAYING ANOTHER GAME!
HUH?
THAT WAS JUST A FLUKE.
He's a sore loser, Mucchan. You'd better run...
Heh... I'm still pretty rusty...
And it paid off!
CLAP CLAP

I'M JUST GOING TO PUT THIS PIECE BACK HERE...
Like this, and then...
WHAT? YOU CAN'T PUT THAT BACK!
...
That's a shocker...
WHAT'S GOING ON OVER THERE?
SHOGI. MUCCHAN'S PLAYING WITH GRANDPA BECAUSE YOU WERE BUSY.
HE'S REALLY GOOD, THOUGH!

HOLD ON!
CHE-
HMPH
WAIT! WAIT!
WAIT! Please...
AWW, SIR! THAT'S YOUR 12TH DO-OVER!
HA HA! OKAY, GO!

WHAT, REALLY?
I TRY TO BE MOSTLY ACCURATE.
WHAT D'YOU MEAN, "MOSTLY"?
HARUNA, THE NUMBERS DON'T ADD UP.
JUST HOW ROUGH ARE YOUR ROUGH ESTI-MATES?
NO. COFFEE, PLEASE.
SAKE?
Not yet. Don't think I can finish it all today.
Are you done?
IT'S LIKE HE'S GAINED ANOTHER GRANDKID.
YEAH! HIS NEW FAVORITE!
GRANDPA SEEMS TO BE HAVING FUN.
THEN YOU CAN WAIT A LITTLE LONGER!
AWW... OKAY, FINE, I'LL SIT HERE.
AHH, WAIT! WAIT!!
I'VE BEEN WAITING THE WHOLE GAME!
COME ON, SIR...
WAH
WAH
HEEEY!!
AND YOU'RE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF HIM, MUCCHAN! BACK OFF!
GRAND-PA! HANG ON!
DON'T GO MAKING PROMISES YOU CAN'T KEEP!
I don't know what you're talking about.
fwee ♪
NO PAUSE
BUT IT'S GONNA COST YOU.
I'LL WAIT...IF YOU INCREASE THE SIZE OF MY COMPANY'S ORDER. ♡
DONE.
AHH!
Hold on there...


COME ON NOW, GRANDPA. WHY DON'T YOU CALL IT QUITS?
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'RE GONNA WIN...
HOW DARE YOU?!
THEN THINK OF MUCCHAN! IT'S GETTING LATE...
HE CAN SPEND THE NIGHT.
COME ON...
Um... er...
UH...
One more game. All right?
Er, okay...

ZZZZZZ
AND THE OLD MAN'S SNORING LIKE A CHAIN-SAW.
YIKES... THAT KNOT IN THE WOOD LOOKS LIKE A CREEPY FACE.
I don't mind taking the guest room, but it's too bad it's next to the master brewer's room.
This is the first time I've stayed over with a full house.
SNERT
Last time THAT happened...
ZZZZZZ
We ended up playing all night...
...

SNORT
KOFF
ZZZZ ZZZ
ZZZ ZZZ
...
YIPE!
I'M LONELY ...
SIGH...
We're so far apart.
He's baaaack...
WHEW
JUST KEEP IT DOWN, SIR! I CAN'T SLEEP!
THE SNORING STOPPED! WAIT, DID HE STOP BREATHING? WHAT'S GOING ON IN THERE?
?
Now I'm scared!
...but we haven't had any chances to be *alone* together.
I like being treated like part of the family...
We're under the same roof, but I can't be near him.
I only got to see him during dinner, and he seemed really busy. Aw, man...
ZZZZ SNORT
...
ZZZ SNERK
ZZZZ ZZZZ
I'M TRYING TO WALLOW HERE!
SHUT UP!
And with all his work lately...
...he hasn't had time to visit *my* place.

YEAH.
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
KRIII
ARE YOU UP?
KSH KSH
YOU'RE WHAT?!
I'M SNEAKING INTO YOUR ROOM SO WE CAN MAKE LOVE!
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
OH YEAH. THAT'S GRAMPS.
WELL, YOUR GRANDPA'S SNORING SO LOUD I CAN'T SLEEP.
He's something, huh?
Why's he so noisy?
You don't have to make that face!

This is the most careless accounting I've ever...
She's no better than Gramps! I can't hand it in like this!
YEAH. THERE AREN'T ANY EMPTY ROOMS ON THE SECOND FLOOR RIGHT NOW.
AND IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE I'LL GET ANY SLEEP TONIGHT.
YOU DON'T CARE IF I KEEP THE LIGHT ON, DO YOU?
...
Awww...
YAY!
WELL, YOU CAN SLEEP HERE.
CAN I?
THE FUTON'S IN THE CLOSET, AND FEEL FREE TO GET YOURSELF A SNACK...
LETTUCE ALONE...
...WITH *NO DRESSING.*

Honeymoon Salad
Lettuce alone, without dressing.
↓
Let us alone, without dressing.
It's an old American pun.
DOES THAT LINE STILL WORK?
OH, YOU'VE HEARD IT.
YEAH, IT DOES, BUT I GUESS IT DOESN'T IMPRESS ANYONE.
SO WHY MAKE SUCH A STALE JOKE?
AW...
SOME-ONE'S BEING COLD...
TAK TAK
WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME? HARUNA AND GRAMPS ARE HERE.
I KNOW, I KNOW, BUT...

MONOTONE
OH YEAH? THAT'S ROUGH. GOOD LUCK.
Aww...
...
Today's Friday.
...I TOLD YOU I'M GOING ON A BUSINESS TRIP ON MONDAY, RIGHT?
OH YEAH, YOU DID.
NEW YORK, WAS IT?
NEW YORK AND SAN FRANCISCO.
I'LL BE GONE TWO WEEKS.
TAK
TAK

BOO
IS THAT ALL YOU HAVE TO SAY?
YOUR BOYFRIEND'S GONNA BE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD FOR TWO WHOLE WEEKS!
BOO!
PSST
DON'T YOU THINK THAT DESERVES A LITTLE MORE?
PSST
A LITTLE MORE WHAT?
COME ON, YOU KNOW ...
KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN.

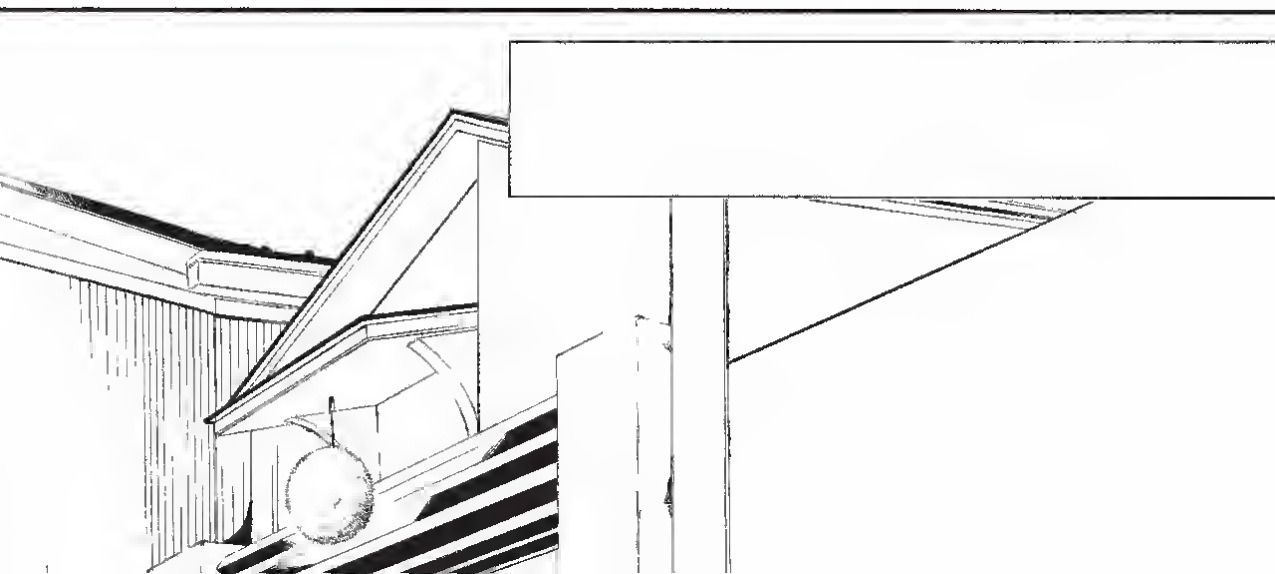
EWW!
...
...
GLOW
I love you, Mutsuki...I can't bear to be apart...
Oh, Shu...
...OR WHATEVER!
...THE COUPLE DIVES BENEATH SHEETS SOAKED IN UNTOLD PLEASURES ...
ON THE NIGHT BEFORE OUR HERO'S LOVER JOURNEYS FAR AWAY...

INSTEAD, YOU'RE SO BUSY I'VE BARELY SEEN YOU AT ALL.
I know your job's important, but so's mine.
...
AND WHEN I CAME OVER FOR DINNER, YOU ACTED SO COLD.
Good food, though.
I CAME THIS CLOSE TO YOUR GRANDPA'S FACE BEING MY LAST MEMORY OF JAPAN!
I won every single game.
I KNOW YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF WORK TO DO, BUT YOU COULD MAKE A LITTLE TIME FOR M-
WHAM
DO YOU EVER SHUT UP?
YIPE
!?
Oops! Did I push it too far?

NGN...
MM...
NGN...
I'LL HEAD OVER TO YOUR PLACE TOMORROW.
THIS WILL HAVE TO TIDE YOU OVER FOR TONIGHT.
MM...
SH...
SHU...?

HEY.
YOU PUT THE YUKATA ON WRONG AGAIN.
YOU'RE NAGGING ME ABOUT THAT NOW?
YOU'RE BEING PRETTY BOSSY.
GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT?
NOPE.
I LIKE IT...
YEAH, SO?
WHY NOT?
HEY... DON'T...
YOU'RE RUBBING MY THIGH.
OOH... WA.. IT...
DON'T TOUCH ME...
...IF YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GO ALL THE WAY!

EEP
SLAP
Heh heh heh
NOW YOU'RE GETTING BOSSY. SOMEONE NEEDS A SPANKING.
Heh
OOH...
HEY... DON'T...
KEEP IT QUIET...
...
...



WELCOME TO...
OH, MUCCHAN, IT'S YOU!
HEY, YOU'RE NOT WEARING A SUIT.
HELLO THERE!
OH, I SEE. YOU WERE IN NEW YORK, RIGHT?
You cut your bangs! Cute!
IT'S MY DAY OFF. I JUST GOT BACK FROM MY BUSINESS TRIP, SO I HAVE A PAID HOLIDAY.
Thanks! You're the only one who noticed!
YUP. HERE'S A LITTLE SOUVENIR FOR YOU ALL TO SHARE.
YAY! THANKS!
UMM...
HM?
SO...
ching
LOOKING FOR MY BROTHER?
BDMPiii!
Y-YEAH. IS HE HERE?
She always calls it. Am I that obvious?

HE'S OUT RIGHT NOW.
HE SAID HE HAD SOME MINOR BUSINESS TO TAKE CARE OF AND DISAPPEARED.
OH YEAH?
I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE RAN OFF TO.
HE NEVER TELLS ME ANY-THING.
SO TRUE!
He never does...
He doesn't consider anyone else's needs!
WHEREVER HE GOES, LATELY HE'S BEEN STAYING THERE ALL NIGHT.
He comes in the next morning, but still...
What?
?
BUT I GAVE HIM DELIVERIES TO RUN, SO HE'LL BE BACK TO REPORT IN THIS EVENING.
OH, YEAH! HE'S DELIVERING TO KOCHAN'S PLACE TONIGHT.
Kochan's a friend of yours, right?
BRRNG BRRNG
...
KO-CHAN'S, HUH?
OKAY, THANKS.
ACK! COMING!
I'M HEADING OUT NOW, OKAY?
OKAY! THANKS FOR THE SOUVENIR!

OH, MUCCHAN!
BRRNG
GRANDPA WOULD LOVE ANOTHER GAME OF SHOGI WITH YOU.
WOULD YOU MIND PLAYING AGAIN SOMETIME?
SURE!
HELLO, WAKATAKE BREWERY
WAKATAKE
Maybe I should lose a game to be nice...
Hmm..
Wait..wasn't I going to ask her something?
I'm all set! He can come any time!
CHOK
NO I'M NOT!
YOU KNOW, WE'RE NOT EVEN OPEN YET. YOU'RE IN THE WAY.

DON'T JUST SIT THERE STARING! GIMME A HAND HERE!
THAT KID DOESN'T COME UNTIL 7:00 P.M. WE'RE THE LAST STOP ON HIS ROUTE.
WHAT?!
LET'S SEE... DO YOU HAVE ANY RECOMMEN-DATIONS?
MORE OF THE SAME, OR WOULD YOU LIKE TO TRY ANOTHER?
EXCUSE ME! ANOTHER GLASS OF SAKE, PLEASE!
TRY THESE!
TA-DA!
YOU BET I DO!
COMING RIGHT UP!

That's not what I meant...
Sorry I'm late.
There you are! We've been waiting!
Good evening!
SHOOF
I DON'T KNOW... I DON'T REALLY LIKE SAKE.
AND FOR YOU, MA'AM, I RECOMMEND SHUNKA.
IT IS A BIT PRICEY, BUT IT'S VERY FRAGRANT AND PACKS A NICE PUNCH. IT'S VERY DRINKABLE.
TENKOU? I'VE HEARD THE NAME BEFORE...
...BUT ISN'T IT EXPENSIVE?
What the hell?
He was free, so I drafted him!
WOW, YOU DON'T HEAR OF MANY FEMALE BREWERS...
...AND SHE DESIGNED IT SPECIFICALLY FOR YOUNG WOMEN WHO DON'T ENJOY YOUR TYPICAL SAKE.
THE BREWER WHO MADE SHUNKA IS A WOMAN HERSELF...
Doesn't drink.
MANY PEOPLE SAY THAT, BUT ONCE YOU TRY A REALLY GOOD SAKE, IT OPENS UP A WHOLE NEW WORLD!
I HOPE YOU'LL TRY SOME.
HMM... SOUNDS INTERESTING.
What they call "Tanrei Karakuchi."
YOU CAN ONLY GET A FRAGRANCE LIKE THIS WITH A VERY CAREFULLY PREPARED DAIGINJO.
NO, NOT AT ALL. IT'S VERY LIGHT AND REFRESHING, WITH A CRISP TASTE.
100% second-hand knowledge.
APPLE BLOSSOMS? IS IT SWEET?
IT HAS A SUBTLE FRAGRANCE OF APPLE BLOSSOMS.

One Shunka and one Tenkou!!
KOCHAN, WHAT GLASSES DO I USE?
OKAY, YOU TWISTED MY ARM. I'LL HAVE THE SHUNKA!
OKAY!
Thank you very much!
I'LL HAVE THE TENKOU, THEN.
USE A CUT GLASS FOR BOTH.
HEY!
NOW SERVING ODEN!
YOU SHOULD'VE LET ME KNOW YOU WERE HERE!
I'LL BE RIGHT THERE! GIVE ME A MINUTE!
WHY SHOULD I WAIT?
OH, DON'T BE LIKE THAT. HE'S BEEN WAITING FOR YOU ALL EVENING.
...
WE'RE YOUR LAST DELIVERY, RIGHT? SO YOU'VE GOT NOWHERE TO GO. STAY AND HAVE A DRINK.
SIGH...

I'm all yours, Kochan!
THANKS FOR WAITING!
Sake? Shochu? We also have wine.
HAVE A SEAT. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DRINK? BEER?
NAH. I'M DRIVING, SO I SHOULDN'T DRINK.
WELL, THAT'S NO PROBLEM. YOU'VE GOT YOUR DESIGNATED DRIVER RIGHT OVER THERE.
Good point... BEER, THEN.
THUMP

DON'T TELL ME YOU DIDN'T SEE THE TEXT I SENT YESTERDAY TELLING YOU I WAS BACK, EITHER.
A TEXT? I DIDN'T SEE IT.
YOU SHOULD'VE COME OVER AND SAID HI.
I SENT YOU A TEXT SAYING I'D BE HERE.
As I was going to bed.
THAT I SAW.

I WAS REALLY BUSY YESTERDAY, SO I PROBABLY WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO.
Many, this is good.
I DUNNO.
WOULD YOU HAVE COME?
I WAS EVEN HOPING YOU MIGHT PICK ME UP FROM THE AIRPORT...
IF YOU WANTED ME TO PICK YOU UP, YOU SHOULD'VE JUST SAID SO.
Not that I was expecting it.
...
MUNCH MUNCH

EXCUSE ME.
OH... OKAY.
I'LL DO THAT.
I can't do anything on short notice.
YOU HAVE TO TELL ME THAT STUFF IN ADVANCE, NOT RIGHT WHEN YOU NEED ME. I COULD'VE WORKED SOMETHING OUT.
OH, OKAY...
You were working.
Of course.
I'M JUST HAPPY YOU ENJOYED IT!
I NEVER KNEW SAKE COULD TASTE LIKE THAT! IT REALLY OPENED MY EYES!
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR RECOMMENDING IT.
We wanted to thank you.
Sorry to interrupt...
OH, HI THERE.
THAT SAKE WAS DELICIOUS. I WAS SO SURPRISED! IT REALLY DID SMELL LIKE APPLE BLOSSOMS!
AND THE TENKOU WAS AS GOOD AS YOU SAID!
I'M SO GLAD!
DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE SHUNKA ON THE MENU?
I want my friends to try it.
WE SURE DO. RIGHT, KOCHAN?
Hey, they really like it!
IT'S ALWAYS ON THE MENU.
UNLESS IT'S SOLD OUT.

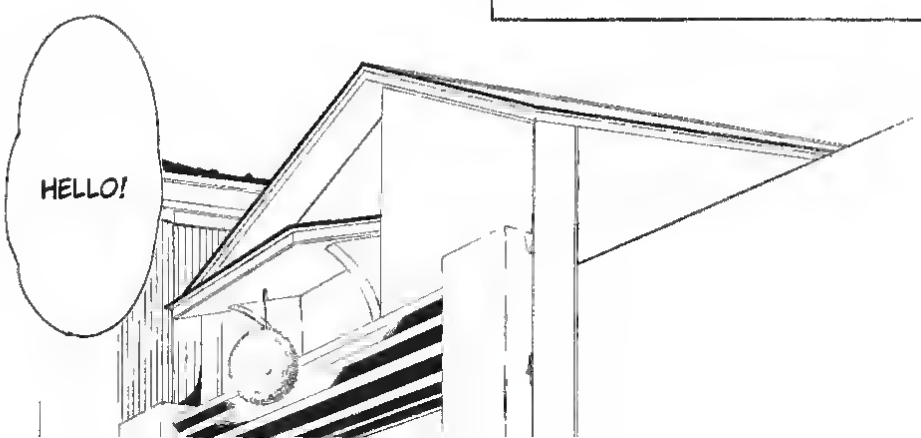
PSST
HE DEFINITELY MARCHES TO HIS OWN BEAT, AND SOMETIMES HE PISSES ME OFF...
WHAT IS IT ABOUT THAT BOY?
Are you an expert on sake?
Well, it was great!
To be honest, I don't drink.
Ha ha ha! What a liar...
Ha ha ha!
...BUT YOU CAN'T HELP BUT LOVE HIM.
DON'T TELL ME YOU CAN'T HANDLE IT.
ARRGH! YOU'VE GOT A STICK SHIFT?
OH, I'LL BE FINE. I'VE GOT MY MANUAL LICENSE.
THUNK
THUNK

WE HAVEN'T SEEN EACH OTHER IN TWO WEEKS! TWO WEEKS!
WHY DO YOU THINK?
WHY?
WHY?!
SO...
...HOW ABOUT WE JUST HEAD TO MY PLACE?
TH-THEN...
I'VE GOT STUFF TO DO TOMORROW MORNING.
Your place is so far away.
NAH, I'LL PASS.
WHAT?!!
A HOTEL!
LET'S GO TO A HOTEL!
THEN...
...
WELL, SOMEBODY JUST TOLD ME I NEED TO BE MORE DIRECT...
OOF!!
GRAB
Shut your mouth!
GRRR
YOU CUT RIGHT TO THE CHASE, DON'T YOU?
Ever heard of TACT?

HUH?
For real?
OH YEAH.
WAKATAKE
Brewery truck.
WHAT? WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING THERE!
BACK TO THE BREWERY.
PIPE DOWN! TO CHANGE CARS! I'M NOT PARKING MY CAR IN FRONT OF A LOVE HOTEL!
HM?
HM?
NEVER MIND.
WHERE TO?
JUST DRIVE.
AH...
MM...
HEY.

WHAT'S UP? YOU'RE AWFULLY QUIET TONIGHT.
MM...
IT'S NOT THAT.
WHERE'S YOUR USUAL ENERGY? IS THE JET LAG GETTING TO YOU?
THEN WHAT IS IT?
YOU'RE GOING HOME ONCE WE FINISH, RIGHT?
I DON'T WANT YOU TO GO.
I'M NOT GONNA LET YOU COME RIGHT AWAY.
IF YOU KEEP TEASING ME...
...I'LL LOSE MY HARD-ON...
YOU BIG LIAR.
SQUEEZE
NGH...
HEH HEH.
QUIT IT.
A SEA OF UNTOLD PLEASURES ...
HFF
NOT THAT AGAIN.
JUST ONCE, I WANT TO MAKE LOVE UNTIL MORNING, THEN START ALL OVER AGAIN.
I WANT THE WORLD TO LET US ALONE... WITH NO DRESSING ...

THUMP
WAIT...
NOT YET...
NOTHING.
NGN...
HEY...
SQUEEZE
HOW CAN YOU BE SO...
HMM?
B... BUT...
OOH...
I CAN'T WAIT FOREVER...
SHA
NGN...
OOH, SHU...
SHU...
I'M NOT GONNA GO HOME.
YOU DOPE.


HELLO!

HOW ARE YOU THIS MOR-
SORRY!
My brother's not here today.
You have such bad timing lately.
BDMP
BDMP
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I'M HERE FOR HIM?
HUH?!
Ha ha!
I THOUGHT I'D SAVE TIME.
No explanation, as usual.
HE LEFT EARLY THIS MORNING, ALL DRESSED UP IN SUIT AND TIE.
A SUIT?
I DON'T THINK HE'LL BE COMING BACK HERE TODAY.
HUH? IS HE GOING FAR AWAY?
HE DIDN'T TELL ME.
NO, BUT HE'LL PROBABLY SLEEP AT HIS OTHER PLACE TONIGHT.
HIS WHAT?
OH, DIDN'T YOU KNOW, MUCCHAN?
HE HAS AN APARTMENT NEARBY.
Haven't you been there?
An apartment?
HUH?
What the hell?!

I had...

...no idea.

# The Scent of Apple Blossoms

...
GLOOM
PSST PSST
I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM THIS BLUE IN A WHILE.
YEAH, UNTIL NOW HE'S BEEN ON A NONSTOP HIGH.

I knew he wasn't open about everything...
...but this is still a bit of a shock.
Does he have secrets...
...he doesn't want me to know?

But...
BUT HARUNA-CHAN KNEW...
...SO MAYBE IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL.
YEAH, I'M SURE IT'S NOTHING.

There's no point in obsessing over it.
We've got a meeting first thing this afternoon!
HARUNA, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
TAF
TAF
LUNCH HOUR'S OVER!
THUNK
HEY, HARU...
?!!
That's the first thing out of his mouth? Ouch!!
Yeah?
WHADDYA WANT? I'M BUSY RIGHT NOW!
!!
BEEP
SHU...
The mature thing to do!
I'LL JUST ASK HIM.
YEAH, I'LL BE THERE IN A SECOND.
NAKAGAWA-KUN, COME LOOK AT THIS.
ASK ME LATER.
DOES IT HAVE TO BE NOW?
BUT I NEED TO KNOW...
HEY! I NEED TO ASK YOU SOMETHING...

I'VE GOT TIME TOMORROW NIGHT. WILL THAT WORK?
SORRY, I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF SOMETHING HERE.
That was a woman's voice.
And it wasn't Haruna.
YEAH... I'LL BE WAITING AT KOCHAN'S.
OH, OKAY. SORRY.
WE CAN'T GET STARTED WITHOUT OUR ENGLISH SPEAKER!
HEY, HARUNA! THE MEETING!
OKAY, I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.
He never really tells me anything about himself.
KLIK
He's busy, but not with brewery work...
What's going on?
GOT IT. OKAY, HANGING UP NOW.
COME ON, HURRY!
I'M COMING!
KLIK
HE SURE IS...
IS HE GETTING WORSE?
MEN ARE LIKE SOAP BUBBLES ...
...HOLD THEM TOO TIGHT AND THEY DISAPPEAR ...

COME ON, IT'S JUST A SONG.
Ah-ha! FINALLY RAN OUT OF PATIENCE WITH YOU, DID HE?
IS HE BREAK-ING UP WITH YOU TODAY?
NO, HE'S NOT!!
DAMMIT, KOCHAN! QUIT SINGING THAT!
IT'S SO FRAGILE, LET'S GIVE IT UP...
LOVE IS LIKE SOAP BUBBLES ...
Uh-oh! Looks serious!
CLANG
...
HE'S NOT, BUT...
HEY.

THIS IS FROM HARUNA.
OOH, WHAT IS IT?
WELCOME!
OH... NOTHING. I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU!
WHAT'S WITH THE LONG FACE?
WE MADE A DATE HERE, RIGHT?
IT'S NOT FOR SALE, SO DRINK IT ON THE SLY.
YEP. IT'S SHUNKA.
Ooh! ♡ THANK YOU!
...JUST PRESSED?
BLUP
The bubbles, the murki-ness...
IS THIS...
BLUP
AH
Do your home-work!
...
I try, but there's so much to learn...
YOU BUY SAKE FROM WAKATAKE, BUT YOU KNOW ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!
JUST WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE. FRESHLY PRESSED SAKE.
Beer, please.
WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?
WHAT'S "JUST PRESSED"?

Many kinds of sake fall under the category "just pressed"! Some are clear, and some aren't sparkling. Isn't that fascinating?
When the sake ferments, it creates carbon dioxide. It's naturally carbonated!
BUT THIS SAKE IS CLOUDY WHITE AND SPARKLING.
IT'S JUST REFINED AND NOT FILTERED AT ALL, SO THIS SAKE IS ALIVE!
WHEN THEY MAKE REGULAR SHUNKA, THEY REFINE IT, FILTER IT, THEN PASTEURIZE IT.
THAT'S WHY IT'S CLEAR. SEE?
And we don't make much.
Seems like it would really sell! Heck, I'd love to carry it!
THAT'S SO NEAT! WHY DON'T YOU SELL THIS?
WOW! IT'S REALLY BUBBLING!
IT'S NOT RELIABLE ENOUGH TO OFFER FOR SALE.
BLUP
BLUP
IT'S ONLY PRODUCED DURING THE EARLY BREWING SEASON, SO IT'S A RARE AND PRECIOUS SAKE!
IT'S WAY STRONGER THAN NORMAL SAKE.
KNOCK IT OFF.
WHAT?
But it's so delicate!
Like soda pop...
CAN I LICK IT?
Just one drop...
GULP
IT SMELLS SO NICE...
I BET IT'S DELI-CIOUS...

LA LA LA ♪
MUTSUKI-CHAN, YOU'D NEVER BE ABLE TO HANDLE THIS!
SINCE THERE AREN'T ANY CUSTOMERS, I THINK I'LL DRINK UP NOW. ♪
Aww...
AND YOU DESERVE A KICKBACK!
I GOT SOME NICE CHICKEN, SO I MADE TSUKUNE SKEWERS! THEY'RE A SPECIAL FOR TODAY, AND THEY CAME OUT PERFECTLY! HAVE SOME!
OOH, I WANT SOME TOO!
NONE FOR YOU! I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TO GO AROUND.
You can have stewed veggies.
WHAT?
How can a man who drinks soda with his meals appreciate fine dining? ✧
I can too! And what's wrong with soda?
SO IS IT GOOD?
GREAT. Delicious.
ISN'T IT? THANK YOU! ♡
MNCH
MNCH
YOU EAT YOUR VEGGIES.
SO WHAT DID YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT?
Eggplant inakani...
HUH?
But I wanted meeeat...

Oh.
YOU HAD SOMETHING ON YOUR MIND, RIGHT?
That's right.
YEAH.
SO, OKAY!
UM...
He'll tell me if I ask him, right?
He's not a liar!
But...
...what do I do...
...
...if he says something I don't want to hear?

GRP
If the truth is going to destroy our relationship...
...maybe I should just pretend I don't know.
WELL? WHAT?
He's been keeping it secret...
...which means he doesn't want me to ask.
...
for example...
CUT TO THE CHASE
WE HAVE AN APARTMENT TOGETHER.
I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO TELL YOU, BUT I'VE GOT A LIVE-IN GIRLFRIEND.
Could it be?
But I d/d/ hear a woman's voice over the phone...
Nah, come on! There's no way!
Or something like that...
I was on the phone with this guy who never shuts up...
Okay, okay...
Come on, baby!
Change the light bulb!
WAH WAH WAH
...?!
...?

IF YOU WANT IT THAT BADLY, BE MY GUEST.
YOUR MOUTH WAS HANGING OPEN.
?!
MMPH
MMPH
hrrf...
GRP
GRP
?!
MMPH?!
So maybe I shouldn't ...
?!
If we can just stay like this...
ER... YEAH.
MUCH
IT'S DELICIOUS. THANKS.
DON'T START BAWLING OVER CHICKEN SKEWERS.
YOU MUST REALLY LIKE 'EM...
?
?
Don't make me retch.
...
HUH? WE WEREN'T... ♡
Are you feeding each other now?
DON'T START GETTING ALL FLIRTY JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE ALONE IN HERE!
HEY, YOU TWO LOVE-BIRDS!

OH...
YEAH.
IT'S JUST...
SO? WHAT IS IT?
For the second time.
DON'T WORRY. YOU'RE STILL IDIOTICALLY UPBEAT.
I CAN'T EXPRESS WHAT I REALLY WANT TO SAY...IT'S NOT LIKE ME.
I FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN WEIRDLY... NEGATIVE LATELY.
I NEVER USED TO BE THIS WAY.
hmph
hmph
Bartender! A highball, and make it strong!
HEY! I SAID NO FLIRTING!
WE'RE NOT FLIRTING!
AWW...♡
...!
THAT'S PART OF IT, BUT I ALSO MISSED YOU...
YOU CALLED ME OUT HERE JUST TO SAY THAT?
IS THAT ALL?

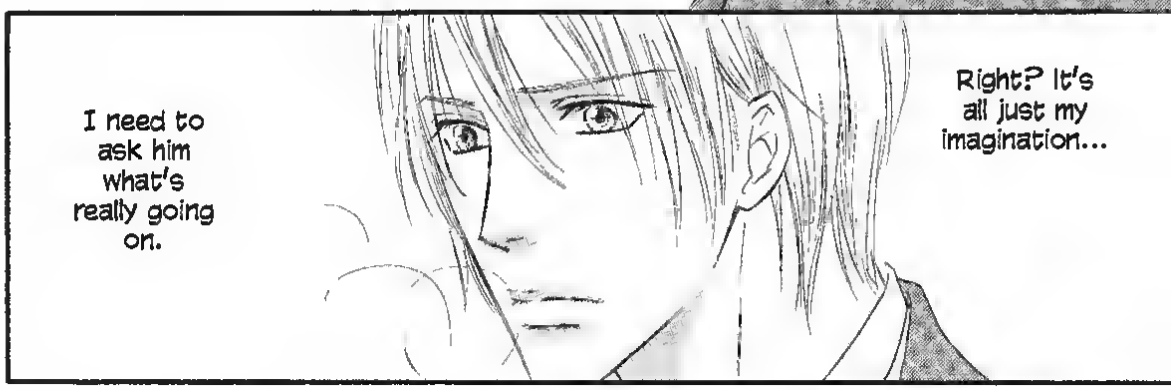
HEY, SHU...
DO YOU LOVE ME?
CHU
SLP
WHAT?
...
Don't glare at me!
?!!
MMM ...
HEY...
1008
HARUNA
JEEZ... DON'T EXPECT THAT KIND OF STUFF FROM ME.
SKCH
SKCH
I SUCK AT IT.
I FIGURED AS MUCH, BUT...
HUH? WELL, I MEAN...
I REALIZED I'VE NEVER HEARD YOU SAY YOU LOVE ME.
WHAT? YOU DON'T LOVE ME? OR YOU JUST CAN'T SAY IT?
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO GET ME TO SAY?

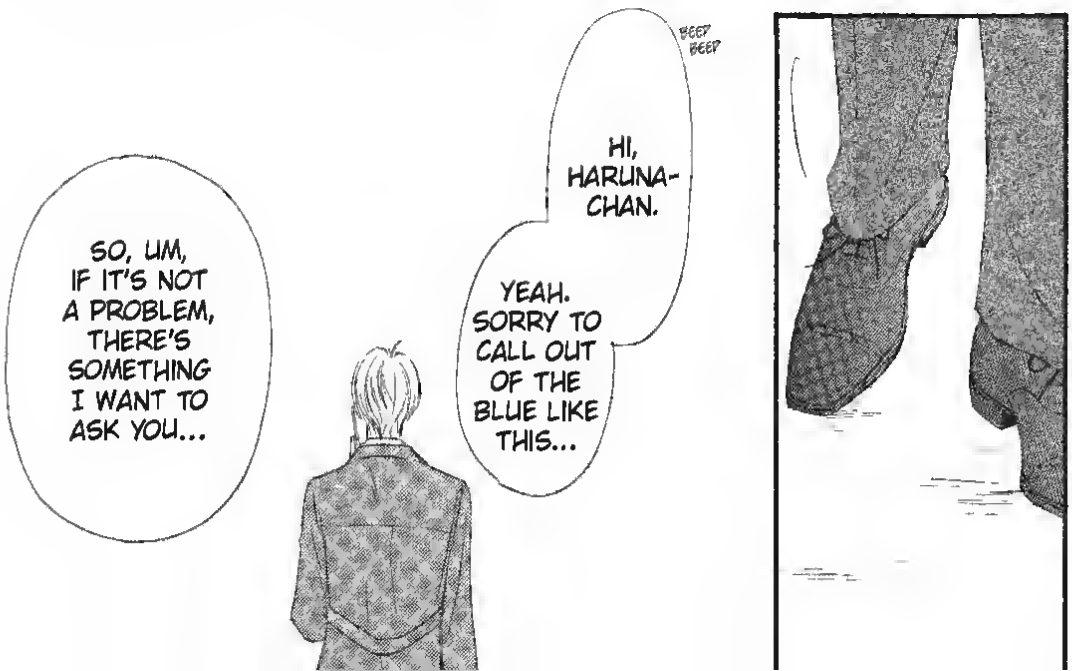
I GUESS NOT, BUT...
JUST SHUT UP.
MMM...
WOULD I DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS WITH SOMEONE I HATED?
NGN...
...
...I'D LIKE TO HEAR IT AT LEAST ONCE.
SHU...
MMN...
SHUT YOUR MOUTH.
FLK
OOH...
AH!
OH...
OOH...

PEOPLE IN TRUE LOVE...
...REALLY BECOME COWARDS, DON'T THEY?
HUH?
HARUNA? WHAT'S WITH YOU LATELY?
SIGH...
NEVER MIND.
WELL, I'M OFF TO DO THE ROUNDS OF OUR STORES. I WON'T BE BACK IN THE OFFICE TODAY.
UH, OKAY.
I'm happy, but I'm anxious...or am I anxious because I'm happy?
Is the prince of romance angsting again?
Who's a coward?
Huh?
Haruna just said something weird...
CLOSED
SO I'LL THINK OF SOME IMPROVEMENTS, ALL RIGHT?
PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF THERE'S ANYTHING ELSE.
I WILL! THANKS A LOT!
SEE YOU LATER, THEN.

I finished up early today.
What should I do now? Maybe I'll just go back to the office...
Oh!
It's fate!
SHU...

...and they were walking away from the brewery...
WHOOSH
He was wearing a suit...
SNIFF
What was *that?*
...and he was with a woman, carrying bags...
No...I mean, it couldn't be...
He's not *smart* enough to two-time me!


I need to ask him what's really going on.
Right? It's all just my imagination...


BEEP BEEP
HI, HARUNA-CHAN.
YEAH. SORRY TO CALL OUT OF THE BLUE LIKE THIS...
SO, UM, IF IT'S NOT A PROBLEM, THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO ASK YOU...

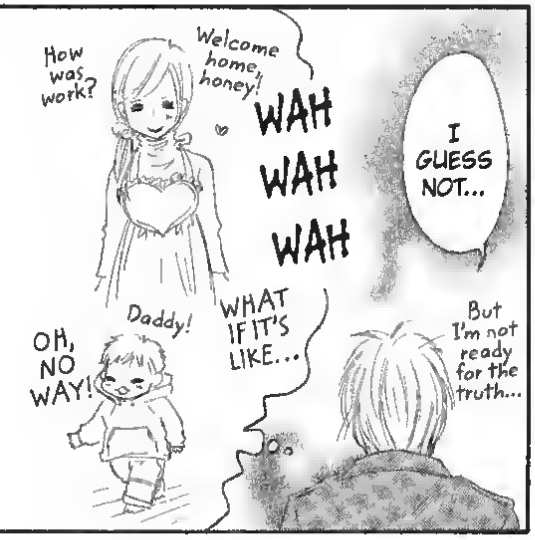
The Scent of Apple Blossoms

No problem!
Got a pen?
She gave me the address of his apartment right away.
She even told me his apartment number. What's going on?
SITTING STILL
It's so cold...
I need to ask him.
I can't go on like this...
WOOF!
PANT
PANT
HEY, ARE YOU ALL BY YOURSELF?
Hey there...
SNORT SNORT
I'M ON A STAKEOUT.
HA HA! YOU LOOK LIKE QUITE THE GENTLEMAN!
I'M SO SORRY!
HIS LEASH CAME OFF!
OH NO ...

SORRY TO BOTHER YOU! ARE YOU OKAY?
...
UM...
UMM...
HE DIDN'T HURT YOU, DID HE?

I'M HEADING IN TO MY PLACE!
COME ON, RAIZO!
WOOF!
I'LL SEE YOU LATER.
OKAY! THANKS FOR HELPING ME WITH RAIZO!
...
PAT
KANA-CHAN ...
...HE'S HERE FOR ME.
HUH? HE IS?
Oh...
SO YOU FOUND ME OUT, HUH?

WE'LL TALK LATER.
OH...
COME ON.


How was work?
Welcome home, honey!
WAH WAH WAH
I GUESS NOT...
Daddy!
OH, NO WAY!
WHAT IF IT'S LIKE...
But I'm not ready for the truth...

EEP
...

702
KLICK
COME IN.
IS...IS THAT OKAY?
NOW THAT YOU'RE HERE, DOES IT MATTER?

KLIK
WATCH OUT FOR THE BOXES.
RIGHT...
COME ON IN, ALREADY.
OH... RIGHT.
...?
KUMAKOKO MOVERS
ANYWHERE IN THE COUNTRY
KUM
WHEN I DECIDED TO WORK AT THE BREWERY...
...I WAS GOING TO SELL THIS PLACE.
BUT SOMEHOW...
...I ENDED UP KEEPING IT...
...BECAUSE I WANTED SOMEWHERE I COULD BE ALONE.
UM, WHAT IS THIS?
FWSH
THE PLACE WHERE I USED TO LIVE.
I LIVED ALONE HERE WHEN I WAS WORKING AS A SYSTEMS ENGINEER.
ANYWHERE IN THE COUNTRY

DO YOU NEED TO GET AWAY FROM ME SOMETIMES, TOO?
I LIKE HOW LIVELY IT IS...
...BUT SOMETIMES I JUST NEED MY OWN SPACE.
ALONE?
GRAMPS AND HARUNA ARE ALWAYS AT THE BREWERY.
GRP
Sheesh!
...
YOU CAN'T HIDE YOUR FEELINGS, CAN YOU?
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS SAY, "OF COURSE NOT."
...

BESIDES, I GET IT.
YOU NEED A MAN CAVE.
Ha ha!
THAT'S OKAY.
SIGH
THAT'S JUST HOW YOU ARE, AND I LOVE YOU FOR IT.
SORRY...
...
I WAS PLANNING TO TELL YOU...
IT JUST KEPT SLIPPING MY MIND.
I BET.
NOW, THEN!
SINCE YOU CAN'T HIDE ANYTHING FROM ME, I'VE GOT A QUESTION.
WHO WAS THAT WOMAN EARLIER?
HER?
OH, SHE'S A NEIGH-BOR.
NOK
I RAN INTO HER AND SHE WAS HAVING TROUBLE WITH HIM, SO I HELPED HER OUT.
SHE'D JUST PICKED HER DOG UP FROM THE GROOMER'S.
WOOF WOOF
Raizo: male, age two.

B-BUT YOU JUST KNOW SHE SEES YOU AS THE HOT OLDER NEIGHBOR!
AND WHO WAS THAT WOMAN I HEARD ON THE PHONE THE OTHER DAY?
Right, Raiza?
Hee hee! I sure do!
HMM ...
YOU TWO SEEMED PRETTY CLOSE...YOU EVEN CALLED HER KANA-CHAN.
HUH? I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOUR HEAD, BUT SHE'S IN MIDDLE SCHOOL!
I've known her since she was a little kid.
WHAT?!
I'm in 7th grade.
I'm 14.
RFF
THE PHONE?
IN YOUR HEAD, THIS HAS TURNED INTO SOME CONVOLUTED SOAP OPERA, HASN'T IT?
Oh... THAT WAS PROBABLY ONE OF MY OLD COWORKERS.
FROM YOUR SYSTEMS ENGINEER JOB?
A CLIENT'S SYSTEM WAS GOING CRAZY AND SHE COULDN'T FIX IT BY HERSELF, SO I WENT IN TO HELP.
IT WAS A PROGRAM I'D DESIGNED, AND DEALING WITH THAT SYSTEM IS A BLOODBATH.
YEAH. I STILL FREELANCE THERE SOMETIMES.

WHAT?
ER, WELL... SORT OF...
MY IMAGI-NATION RAN WILD.
WERE YOU IMAGINING SOMETHING CRAZY?
OH... SO THAT WAS THE ERRAND YOU HAD TO WEAR A SUIT FOR?
THAT WAS IT.
I'VE GOT MY HANDS FULL WITH JUST YOU.
TRUST ME, I'M NOT THAT CLEVER.
HAVE A LITTLE FAITH IN ME.
YEAH...

...
...?
BLINK
ERK
!
YOU OKAY?
MM?
HUH? DID I FALL ASLEEP?
SHOOF
YOU WERE MORE THAN ASLEEP.
YOU WERE OUT COLD.
SO I WAS THAT GOOD, HUH?
HEH HEH
...

PAF
WELL, YOU LIE DOWN FOR A WHILE.
IS THAT SO?
I WAS JUST SLEEP-DEPRIVED!
Don't smirk like that!
Alone in this room full of boxes, without even a bed...
...just what does he think about?
He's such a difficult man...

DO YOU LOVE ME?
THAT AGAIN? YOU REALLY DON'T GIVE UP.
NO FAIR...
I FEEL LIKE I'M GOING TO CRY...
...BUT AT THE SAME TIME I'M SO HAPPY.
Maybe I just want too much...
HEY, SHU.
CRUSH
WILL YOU WORRY?
IF I DON'T SAY IT?
NO, BUT...
WELL, MAYBE. I DON'T REALLY KNOW.
EVEN I GET DOWN SOME-TIMES.
GSH
I MEAN, I'M ONLY HUMAN.
Ha ha...

SHU...
PSST
BRRR
NGN...
SO STINGY.
SAY WHAT-EVER YOU WANT.
I'M NOT SAYING IT.
JUST ONE MORE TIME...
S-SAY IT AGAIN...
I'M NOT SAYING IT AGAIN.

OH!
FLK
GSHH
THAT...
SHH...
MMM...
MM...
YOU'LL HAVE TO MAKE DO WITH THIS.
YOU'RE SO HONEST...
AH
DOES IT HURT?
NO...IT FEELS SO GOOD.
KEEP DOING THAT.
HFF
GSH GSH
OOH...
AHH...
MMM ...
OOOH...
JUST RELAX.
GSH

SHU...
DOES IT FEEL GOOD INSIDE ME?
SO STINGY...
YOU BITCH ABOUT EVERYTHING, BUT YOU WON'T BE HONEST.
I'M NOT TELLING.
NGN...
SHUSH. YOU'RE REALLY PUSHING IT NOW.
GSSH
HEY...
WAI-
AHH...
NGN...
OOOH...

AAH...
NN...
NGN...
BZZZ
CHIKKA
CHIKKA
CHIKKA
BZZZ
HEY.
HOW CUTE IS HE? OH, MAN... I love it!
AHA HA HA!
OH!
A TEXT?
FLIP
HEY, SOMEONE CALLED ME.
THIS LIGHT MEANS IT'S ONE OF MY FAVORITES ...
FWASH
FWASH

WHO'S THIS GUY WHO'S TEXTING YOU?
DO YOU HAVE NO DECENCY? DO YOU NEVER LEARN?
GRP
WHAT?
HUH?
When did you give him your number, and why is he texting you about shogi?
Gramps?
...
TEXT RECEIVED
Wakatake Brewery
(non title)
Shogi...
HERE'S YOUR GUY!
HEY.
GUY?
BLUNT
You've got the wrong idea!

TOSS
DO IT LATER.
THAT'S SO MEAN!
HEY!
I CAN'T. NOT WHEN HE TOOK THE TROUBLE TO TEXT ME.
JUST LEAVE IT.
BIP
BIP
BIP
I WONDER WHAT TIME IT IS...
I SHOULD AT LEAST WRITE BACK.
Let's see... I can play tomorrow...
THIS IS THE PLACE TO FORGET ABOUT THE REST OF THE WORLD.
I'M NOT GONNA LET YOU.
IT'LL JUST TAKE A SECOND...
YOU KNOW WHAT I'M LIKE.
GIVE IT UP.
YIPE
...IT'S JUST A TEXT...
BUT...

SHU...
C'MERE.
WE'RE GOING ALL NIGHT, AREN'T WE?
YEAH ...
OOH ...
MM...
BNNN
CHKKA CHKKA
BNNN
CHKKA

SERIOUSLY, WHAT ARE YOU DOING, MUCCHAN? AT LEAST TEXT BACK!
...
SHIIING
He's ready and rarin' to go.
COME ON, SIR!
CLIP
HEY, SIR, LOOK!
I BROUGHT CHEESE-CAKE!
I heard you liiike it...
...
CLIP
CLIP
I'M SORRY ABOUT THE OTHER DAY.
I WAS BUSY WITH SOMETHING AND I DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO ANSWER RIGHT AWAY...
...
CLIP
DON'T YOU WANT TO PLAY SHOGI?
SIR!
CLIP
EVERY-THING'S ALL SET UP!
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
I SEE HOW IT IS. I'LL HEAD HOM-
I'M SORRY. I'M JUST BUGGING YOU, AREN'T I?
AFTER ALL, YOU'VE GOT YOUR OWN THINGS TO DO.
AW, SIR...

WOO ☆ HOO ☆
HOLD ON!!
CHECK!
ka-ching!
Feeling kinda guilty.
...
HE ALWAYS REPLIES RIGHT AWAY. I WONDER IF SOMETHING HAPPENED.
...
GRANDPA'S REALLY TAKEN WITH MUCCHAN, HUH?
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN HE DIDN'T ANSWER HIS PHONE...
I'll get you this time!
Got it! Now just wait!
Heh heh
Sure... if you'll increase our orders every five minutes...
Again, sir?
MUNCH MUNCH

RRNG
HELLO?
MMM...
RRNG
RRNG
HARUNA-CHAN? NO, THAT'S OKAY. I WAS JUST DOZING.
REALLY, IT'S FINE. IT'S NOT EVEN 11:00 P.M. YET.
TOMORROW? SUKIYAKI?
I'D LOVE IT! I'LL BE THERE! I'M SO GLAD YOU INVITED ME!
OKAY, I'LL COME OVER THERE ON MY WAY HOME TOMORROW.
HMM?
YOUR BROTHER? HE'S NOT THERE?
SPEAKER
OH...I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS...

...
TA DA
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
HE WAS SUPPOSED TO HELP ME ORGANIZE THE WAREHOUSE TODAY, BUT HE JUST DISAPPEARED!
ISN'T IT? AND HIS PHONE IS OFF! WHERE'S THAT LOUSY BROTHER OF MINE, AND WHAT IS HE UP TO?
Heh heh heh... I KNOW, RIGHT?
THAT'S SO MEAN!
HANG UP!
WANT ME TO TRY AND CALL HIM?
MWAH
Quit it!
YEAH?
THAT'S OKAY. IT'S NOT THAT BIG A DEAL.
I'LL WORK HIM DOUBLE NEXT TIME.
YEAH. WELL, SEE YOU TOMORROW!
I'LL PICK UP SOME DESSERT, OKAY?
YAY! I'M SO EXCITED!
HANG UP ALREADY!
SLAP
OUCH!
HIS BUTT
WHAT WAS THAT?
NOTHING. JUST STUBBED MY TOE.
SEE YOU TOMORROW!
OKAY. LATER!

JUST WHO WAS IT WHO INVITED ME OVER HERE?
ME, BUT...
HEH
BIP
SHE SAYS YOU'RE A LOUSY BROTHER.
...YOU BLEW OFF WORK TO COME HERE, HUH?
NO.
I JUST DIDN'T WANT TO HELP CLEAN, THAT'S ALL.
Heh heh heh...
I SEE.

SEEING YOU ENJOY IT SO MUCH, I'M GLAD I INVITED YOU.
AHHH! ♡ THAT WAS DELICIOUS!
I HAVEN'T HAD REAL SUKIYAKI LIKE THIS IN A LONG TIME!
THANKS AGAIN!
I'LL LEAVE THE WASHING UP FOR LATER. LET'S EAT YOUR CAKE!
It's that famous cheese-cake! ♥
I'LL GO MAKE SOME COFFEE!
REALLY?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. YOU JUST SIT. I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS!
CLINK
If you say so...
HEY, WHERE'S GRAND-PA?
HE WAS RIGHT HERE A SECOND AGO.
I DUNNO. HE PROBABLY WENT TO THE BATH-ROOM.
OH.

WOO-HOO! ♡
SUKIYAKI IS THE BEST! AND THE UDON IN THE LEFTOVER BROTH IS SO GOOD! ♡
Tomorrow we're having dried sardines.
I DON'T!
YOU'RE SO LUCKY, GETTING TO EAT LIKE THIS EVERY DAY!
WHEN YOU LIVE ALONE, YOU DON'T DO HOTPOTS.
YEAH, BUT EATING WITH OTHER PEOPLE IS NICE!
I'VE BEEN ON MY OWN FOR SO LONG...
Especially people I love! ♡
HEY!
GRAMPS, WE JUST FINISHED EATING. HOLD YOUR HORSES.
LET'S DO THIS!
I'M NOT GONNA LOSE THIS ONE!
Ha ha!
FINE BY ME!
WHAT ARE THE STAKES TONIGHT?
LOOM

I MADE COFFEE, SO LET'S HAVE THAT CAKE.
I'LL EAT IT HERE.
COME ON...
YOU OWE ME ABOUT A THOUSAND BOTTLES OF SAKE BY NOW, YOU KNOW...
WHAT? GRANDPA, YOU'RE ALREADY PLAYING SHOGI?
ACK!
YEAH, HARUNA WAS GIVING ME GRIEF ABOUT IT. I'LL SMUGGLE SOME OUT FOR YOU.
YOU OUGHT TO PLAY WITH HIM SOME-TIMES.
Seriously... HE'S LIKE THIS EVERY TIME MUCCHAN COMES OVER.
HE SAYS I'M NOT ENOUGH OF A CHALLENGE.
NOT AT ALL. I'D FORGOTTEN JUST HOW MUCH FUN SHOGI IS!
SORRY, MUCCHAN. ISN'T IT A PAIN HAVING TO PLAY WITH HIM ALL THE TIME?
LET'S GO!
TAP
TAP
OKAY, OKAY.
Shameful Memories
HE'S THAT GOOD.
Erk...
IS MUCCHAN REALLY THAT GOOD?
...
ARGH
You promised to do whatever I said if I won, right?
Well, er, then I want...
TWICH TWICH

Mortified

What? No!!
Is it okay if I beat you right away?
BUT I'M SO GRATEFUL TO HIM. HE PLAYS WITH GRANDPA WITHOUT COMPLAINING AT ALL.
HE'S SO SWEET.

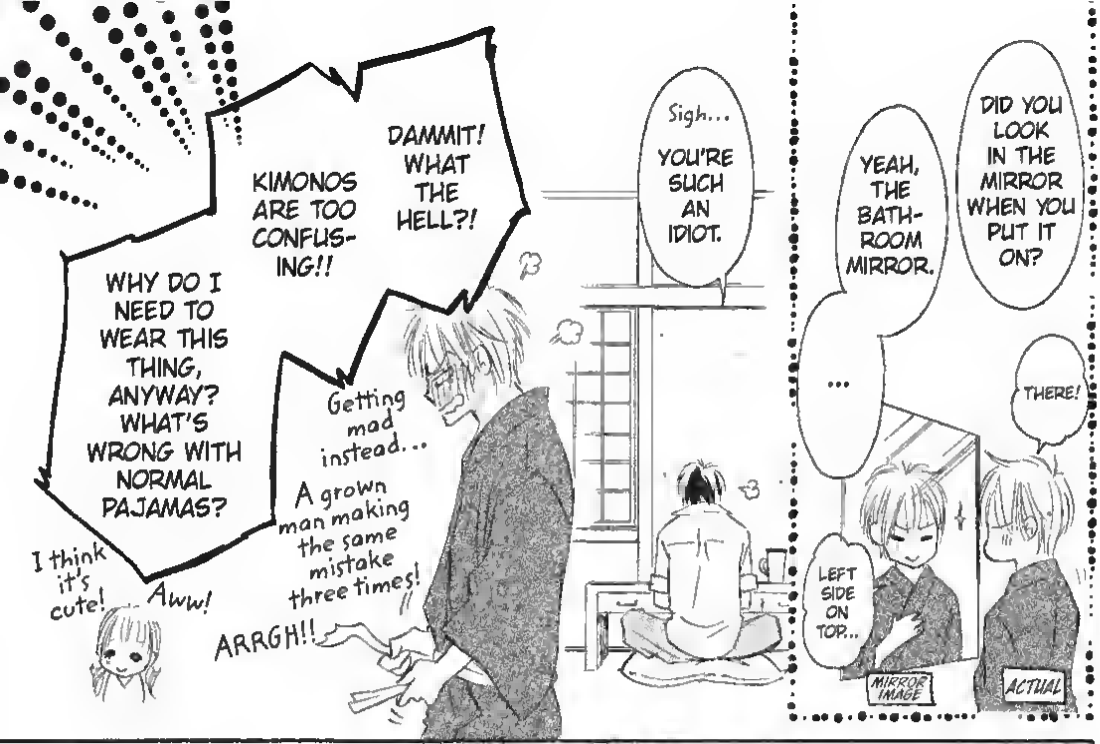
With pleasure!!
Of course!
YES!!
I KNOW GRANDPA'S SNORING KEEPS YOU UP ALL NIGHT, SO IS IT OKAY IF YOU SLEEP WITH MY BROTHER?
PFFT
TUP
OH, MUCCHAN. YOU'RE STAYING OVER TONIGHT, AREN'T YOU?
WHERE DO YOU WANT TO SLEEP?

...
Is she really that naive?
That's why I want you to clean up!
AND WE DON'T HAVE ANY EMPTY ROOMS. THEY'RE ALL FULL OF CLUTTER.
WHAT'S THE MATTER? HE SHARED YOUR ROOM LAST TIME, DIDN'T HE?
Sheesh... say it, don't spray it.
!?
WAIT, WHY? YOU CAN TAKE ANOTHER ROOM!

HEY, THIS CAKE IS REALLY DELICIOUS!
WHERE'S IT FROM?
THIS LITTLE HOLE-IN-THE-WALL BAKERY NEAR MY OFFICE.
Everything there is great!
I WANT THE ADDRESS!
THINKING.
HEH
...
SURE, I'LL SEND YOU A MAP.
OH, DID GRANDPA FALL ASLEEP?
OR IS HE JUST SULKING BECAUSE HE LOST?
HA HA HA. .GOOD QUESTION.
CLACK CLACK

BDMP
ALSO, I THINK MY BROTHER'S IN HIS ROOM.
OKAY, THANKS. I'LL GO DO THAT.
PERFECT TIMING. FEEL FREE TO TAKE A BATH, MUCCHAN.
GRANDPA WON'T WAKE UP UNTIL MORNING ANYHOW.
OKAY!
...
TELL HIM TO TAKE A BATH WHEN YOU'RE DONE, OKAY?
KREEK
AHH, THAT WAS HEAVEN!
TP
TP
KREEK

POOF
POOF
I REALLY LOVE THAT CEDAR BATHTUB! IT SMELLS SO NICE!
I WISH I COULD USE IT EVERY DAY!
THAT WAS A GREAT BATH! ♡
...
OKAY...
HARUNA-CHAN SAID YOU SHOULD GO NEXT.
I WENT AHEAD OF YOU.
SHOOF
I'M COMING IN!
Are you sure?
...
WHAT? NO WAY! BUT I ASKED HARUNA-CHAN BEFORE I PUT IT ON!
SHE MUST'VE TRICKED ME!
YOU'VE GOT IT ON BACK-WARDS!
WHAT?
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU?


DAMMIT! WHAT THE HELL?!
KIMONOS ARE TOO CONFUSING!!
WHY DO I NEED TO WEAR THIS THING, ANYWAY? WHAT'S WRONG WITH NORMAL PAJAMAS?
Getting mad instead...
A grown man making the same mistake three times!
ARRGH!!
I think it's cute!
Aww!
Sigh...
YOU'RE SUCH AN IDIOT.
DID YOU LOOK IN THE MIRROR WHEN YOU PUT IT ON?
YEAH, THE BATHROOM MIRROR.
...
THERE!
LEFT SIDE ON TOP...
MIRROR IMAGE
ACTUAL

WHY CAN'T THEY JUST ADD A BELT?
WHY ARE THEY MADE SO YOU CAN PUT THEM ON EITHER WAY? IT'S CRUEL!

Okay, left on top, left on top....
ARGH ...
KRIK
OR THEY COULD SEW IT IN PLACE!

THEY'RE MADE THIS WAY...
...SO A MAN...
...CAN SLIP HIS HAND INSIDE LIKE THIS.
OOH...

AND YOU'RE NOT WEARING UNDERWEAR AGAIN.
GSSSH
OOOH...
NGH!
IT'D BE NO FUN IF IT WAS ALL SEWN UP.
GRP
MMM...
FLK
SH... SHU...

?
?
WHAT?
HARUNA WILL BITCH AT ME IF I DON'T WASH UP.
I'M GONNA GO TAKE A BATH.
HUH?
SHU...
HFF

ALONE
Is he toying with me?
WHAT?
BUT...
...
...
And look at how he placed the futons!

DRAG
GRR GRR
THAT BASTARD ...
I won't let it get me down!
DAMMIT ...
DRAG

KREEK

When did I...?
I-I WASN'T ASLEEP! I WAS WAITING!
I'M NOT GONNA SLEEP!
HEY.
GET INTO THE FUTON BEFORE YOU DROP OFF.
HUH?
TAP
WUP
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? GO TO SLEEP!
Jeez...
GRIP
...
SO CLOSE

GET TO SLEEP. HARUNA'S GONNA WAKE US UP EARLY TOMORROW.
I STILL HAVE TO ORGANIZE THE WARE-HOUSE.
HELP US OUT, WILL YOU?
OKAY.
DRIP
DRIP
YOU'RE STILL WET.
YOU'LL CATCH A COLD.
RUB
I'M FINE.
RUB

YOU TASTE BITTER.
TING
SLOSH
WHO CARES?
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO THREW YOURSELF AT ME.
WHAT IF I GET DRUNK OFF YOU?
YOU'RE CRUEL.

DO THAT THING AGAIN...
HMM?

MAYBE I SHOULDN'T RISK...
...TAKING ADVANTAGE OF YOU...
ARE YOU DRUNK?
NO, I'M SOBER...
...MOSTLY.
GRP
IT'S A LITTLE LATE FOR THAT.
NGN...

NEVER MIND.
BRRR
OOH.
TWCH
NGN...
A-AT WHAT?
YOU'RE SO GOOD AT THIS.
OH...
I KNOW... EVERYONE'S DOWNSTAIRS...
WE CAN'T HAVE SEX TONIGHT.
HFF
...
OH...

I'M SORRY.
FORCING YOU TO TAKE ALL THESE PRECAUTIONS...
DO YOU THINK...
...HARUNA-CHAN SUSPECTS SOMETHING?
SHE DOESN'T HAVE A CLUE. SHE'S SO INNOCENT.
I HOPE SO.
YOU JUST BE YOUR USUAL CARELESS SELF.
AW, GIMME A BREAK...
AHH... MM...
Heh...
YOU ONLY GET WORRIED AFTER IT'S TOO LATE TO DO ANYTHING.

KNOCK IT OFF.
GRP
I TOLD YOU WE CAN'T HAVE SEX TONIGHT.
HFF
...
WHY DON'T I JUST GET YOU OFF?
...
SNIFF
SNIFF
DAMN...I SHOULD'VE JUST GONE TO SLEEP.
YOU'RE ONE TO TALK.
THIS IS KILLING ME.

GCCH
DON'T BE TOO LOUD.
OH...
NGN ...
AH...
OH...
OHHH...

RRRNG
FWAP
FWAP
URK...
RRRNG
YIPE
RRRNG
BINK
Good morning, Mutsuki! Are you okay?
WHAT?
BIP
HELLO?
...
HUH?
WHAT? WHO IS THIS?
WHAM
ACK!
JESS!

ALL ALONE
OH...
...!!
...!!
Jess, I told you not to call me anymore! Give it a rest!
PSST
PSST
YEAH, I KNOW. BUT I HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU.
What is it?
...When?
TWO WEEKS AGO.
YOU WERE CLOSE TO HIM, SO I THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW.
MY GRANDPA PASSED AWAY.
What?

Are you all right?
YEAH, I'M A LOT CALMER NOW. I MISS HIM...BUT THERE'S NOT MUCH I CAN DO, RIGHT?
Ha ha...
I CALLED YOU RIGHT AFTER IT HAPPENED, BUT YOU DIDN'T PICK UP.
Oh no! Why didn't you tell me sooner?
Oh...I see.
I'm sorry.
ANYWAY, MUTSUKI, I HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK.
YOU SEE...
Huh? What is it?
Okay, if that's the way it is...
Got it. Call me back.
Cheer up, okay? Later...
...
I see.

BDMP
!!!
SPEAKING ENGLISH? ARE YOU STILL HALF-ASLEEP? YOU'RE IN JAPAN, YOU KNOW.
Grandpa Joe...
I'm such a softie...
BEEP
SNIFF
...
I don't have anything to be guilty about! I just need to be honest with him!
WAIT... NO!
...
UH, NO...
I MEAN, YES...
OH... RIGHT!
LATER.
HARUNA'S GONNA BITCH IF WE DON'T COME DOWN FOR BREAKFAST.
LOOK.
JUST NOW, I...

WHAT IF HARUNA HAD COME IN?
AND PUT ON SOME UNDERWEAR IF YOU CAN'T BE MORE CAREFUL.
WHAT?
HUH?
ACK!
I'M FLYING FREE!
It's this damn kimono!!
OOPS! HOLD ON!
OKAY...
...
GET YOUR ASS DOWN-STAIRS.

...

I didn't get to tell him about the phone call.

Oh well. I'll talk to him once we have a free moment.

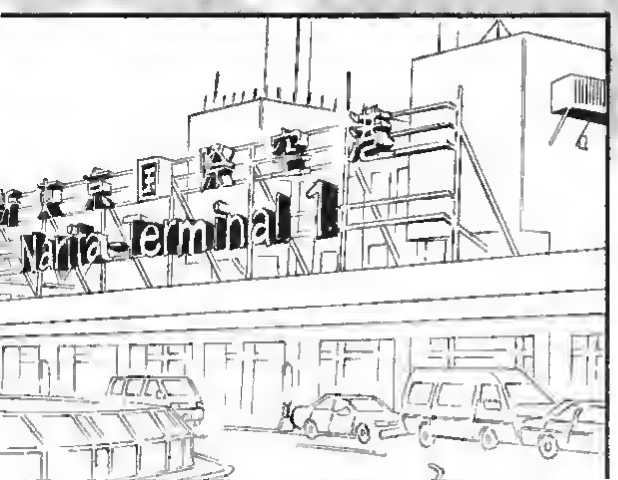
Ooh, a classic Japanese breakfast! Yum!

Breakfast time! Get it before it's gone!

MUNCH MUNCH

MUNCH MUNCH

After all, I've got no reason to feel guilty.




It'll be fine.

Hey, Mutsuki!
Hey, Jess.
Sue me, he's hot!
You still with that nagging boyfriend of yours?
He doesn't nag! He's a wonderful guy!
Sure thing
Long time no see! How've you been?
Oh! my Sweety!
Stop it!
Whoops! No hugs, okay?
No, no! KEEP THE DEFENSES RAISED!
For real? What a letdown.
Jess, is that...

Jess...
He's portable now, see?
I still can't really believe it...
Yup. it's Grandpa's ashes.
I didn't want to pack him in my luggage.
His will said he wanted his ashes scattered in Japan, where he was born and raised.
But I don't know what I'm supposed to do beyond that.
You'll help me out, right, Mutsuki?
Yeah. Leave it to me!
I'm not letting my guard down...
I'm just being a good friend...

Here are the materials you asked for.
Info about scattering the ashes and directions to the coast.
And with a translation too! That'll be a big help. Thank you!

# The Scent of Apple Blossoms

He used to say the sea there was completely different from the sea in California. That it was...*solemn*.
He always talked about wanting to see it one last time.
He told me about that too!
Yeah. By the village where he lived when he was a kid.
It shouldn't be a problem as long as it's somewhere reasonable.
You're going to the ocean, right?

Are you going right away?
No, tomorrow I'm going... where was it? Sai...ta...ma?
Saitama?
It seems like it's pretty out of the way. Will you be all right by yourself?
SHOOF
I'll be fine. I'll just follow your directions and take it slow.
Oh, right. I've got something for you too.
Here.
For me?
That's it. I'm visiting my grandpa's cousin there.
Grandpa left him a little something.
THUNK
Ooh...
Grandpa Joe's pin collection!
That's right! So you remember it?
Of course!
Oh!
This is...
CLINK

Okay. Thank you...
I'll treasure it.
GRP
Why not? Please take it.
It was left over after all the relatives took what they wanted.
Keep it to remember him by.
But are you sure? I didn't...
TMP
Well, I guess I'll get going.
Huh? Where to?
Where else? My hotel.
it's past check-in time, after all.
Oh, it's an apple! I'll have ta shaw Haruna-chan!
I'll put one on now.
...

Really, it's fine.
if I take you up on anything more, we might get carried away.
I'll piss off your straitlaced boyfriend.
I'll drive you there. Let me bring the car around.
That's okay. I'll take the train.
Thanks for everything. You really helped me out by picking me up at the airport.
But it's on my way...
CHAK
Yup. See you later! I'll let you know when I get back.
We can get dinner or something!
All right. Take care.
True. Well, call me if you need anything, okay?

CLANG
WEOO
He travels a lot, though...
THAT'S GOTTA BE A TOUGH TRIP.
I HOPE HE'S OKAY.
FIRE TRUCK! MAKE WAY!
WEOO
CLANG

CLANG
CLANG
WEOO
WEOO
FIRE TRUCK! MAKE WAY!
FIRE TRUCK! MAKE WAY...
JEEZ...
Yikes, a fire truck.
I wonder where the fire is. Could it be nearby?

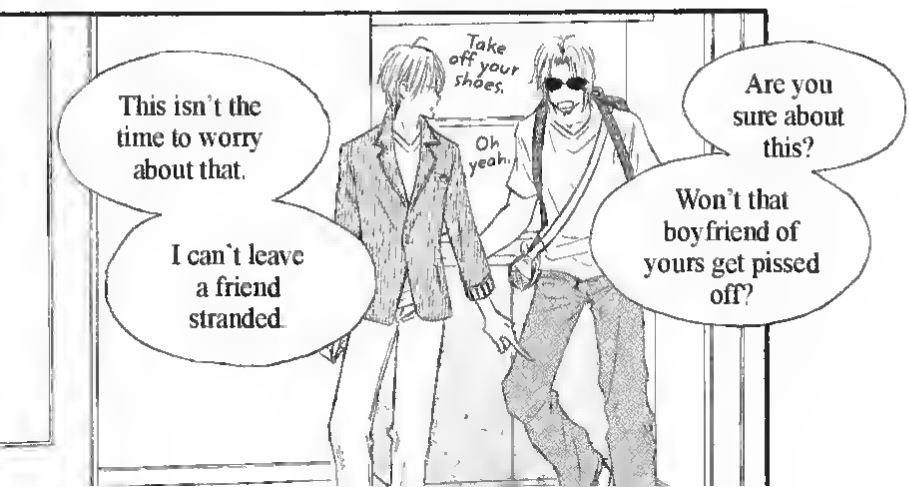
BIP
Hi.
What's up? Did you get lost?
MUTSUKI! THIS IS SERIOUS!
CRACKLE
HUH?
RRRNG
HMM? JESS?
RRRNG
ACK... OKAY... ONE SEC...
KLIK
RRRNG


Jess, what happened?
THE HOTEL IS...
CRACKLE
Huh? What about the hotel?
I can barely hear you. Where are you? Maybe we've got a bad connection.
The hotel is...
CRACKLE

Je—
THE HOTEL I'M SUPPOSED TO BE STAYING AT IS ON FIRE!
THE HOTEL IS ON FIRE!!!

WHAAT?!!
So that's where the truck was going!!
Are you kidding me? Are you okay? Are you hurt?
PAF PAF
I'm fine. I hadn't even checked in yet.
Jess!
Mutsuki...
You didn't have to come all this way.
What are you going to do?
Supposedly the hotel is going to find lodgings for us, but who knows?
Things are still in total confusion.
Apparently no one was hurt, thank God.
But it's pretty crazy.
A lot of foreign tourists stay there, so they're in a panic.

If worse comes to worst, I'll just camp outdoors.
The weather's warm enough.
Jess...
I was only staying for one night anyway.
I'll figure something out
...stay at my place.


This isn't the time to worry about that.
I can't leave a friend stranded.
Take off your shoes.
Oh yeah.
Are you sure about this?
Won't that boyfriend of yours get pissed off?

What a load off…
It's been a nightmare, and I just got here!
Phew…
Come on in. You just flew in to Japan. I bet you're about to collapse from jet lag.
TAF
Thanks!
I owe you one!
SQUISH
Huh?
As long as I'm here, is the window okay?
What do you think, Grandpa? it's been a while since you've seen the Japanese sky, huh?
heh
Oh, crap! The ashes!
Sorry, Grandpa!
I'm getting careless! I need to put him somewhere safe.
Let's see...

zz...
zzz...
WZZ
Mmm?

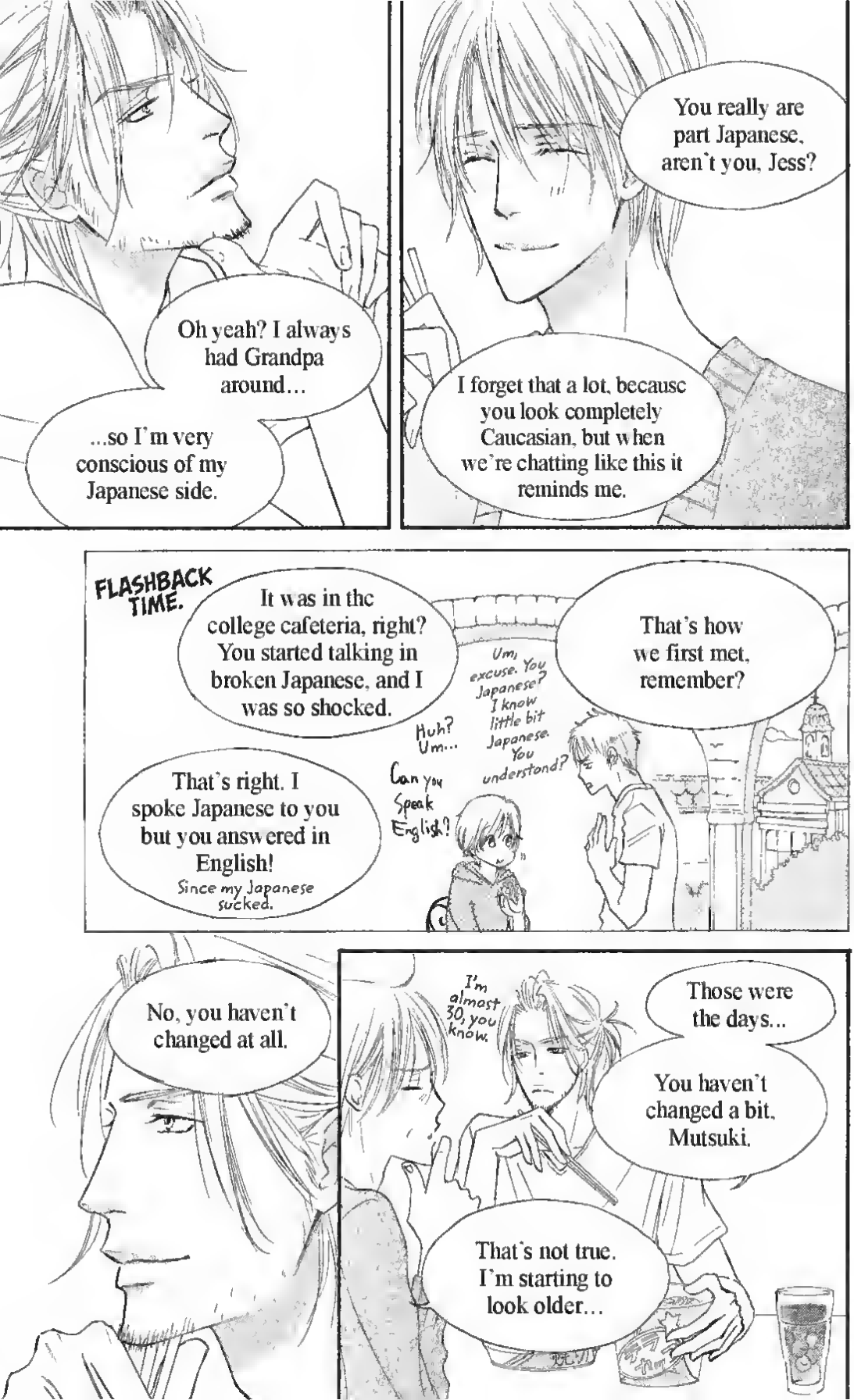
I made tea, Jess.
Green tea, just like you wanted.
Oh, thanks.

Feel free to crash on my bed.
When did I drift off?
Thanks, but what about you, Mutsuki?
Right after your tea.
You must've been tired.

Aww, too bad.
I was hoping we could sleep in the same bed.
I've got a futon.
You'd rather have the bed, right?
Not gonna happen.
Knock it off.

Do I have any food in the place? I haven't cooked in a while...
Then I'll just whip something up.
OH!
Mutsuki!
RUB RUB
Ha ha... I'm just teasing you.
More importantly, I'm hungry, Mutsuki.
Yeah, it's about dinnertime.
What do you want to eat? Want to go out?
Nah, I don't have the energy tonight.
I know what I want!
The national food of Japan!!
What? Sushi?
Are you kidding? I can't make sushi!
THERE YOU GO...
RAMEN

Are you kidding? Every one of these is a rare imported brand I can't get in the States!
Rare?
Uh... huh...
It's been three minutes! Let's eat!
He's a geek for ramen...
Oookay...
Whoa, your place is like a noodle museum!!
Duh! It's a bachelor pad!
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU WANTED INSTANT RAMEN...
Huh?
It's just...this is really all you want for dinner?
Hey, Jess...
Better than me, even.
You're really good with chopsticks.
It's like you were born here.
Bon Appétit!
*Ha ha!* Me neither!
It's so hard. I always admired how Grandpa could just slurp 'em up!
I can even pick up beans! But I can't slurp noodles.
Grandpa taught me!
I can't pick up beans either.
TOK
TOK


You really are part Japanese, aren't you, Jess?
I forget that a lot, because you look completely Caucasian, but when we're chatting like this it reminds me.
Oh yeah? I always had Grandpa around...
...so I'm very conscious of my Japanese side.
FLASHBACK TIME.
It was in the college cafeteria, right? You started talking in broken Japanese, and I was so shocked.
That's how we first met, remember?
Um, excuse. You Japanese? I know little bit Japanese. You understond?
Huh? Um...
Can you Speak English?
That's right. I spoke Japanese to you but you answered in English!
Since my Japanese sucked.
No, you haven't changed at all.
I'm almost 30, you know.
Those were the days...
You haven't changed a bit, Mutsuki.
That's not true. I'm starting to look older...

You're just as cute as ever, Mutsuki.
The cutest guy I ever dated.
Hey, Jess. Don't go there...
I'm just saying. I'm not gonna do anything.
Anyway, you hear it from your boyfriend, right?
He doesn't say stuff like that.
It'd freak me out if he did...
SLURP SLURP
That can't be true.
So what kind of sweet nothings does your control-freak boyfriend whisper in your ear?
Okay, okay, but he tells you he loves you, right?
Even my Grandpa said that all the time!
I told you, he doesn't. Japanese people don't really say stuff like that.
Yeesh...
Just give it a rest! He doesn't, okay?

What?! The first time?!
Only *once?* Are you serious?
Crazy!!
In the States, you could SUE him for that!
Shut up!
F*ck'n!!
Oh! But the other day he said it for the first time!
I wonder when the next time will be...
?!
It made me so happy! Especially since he never says that stuff normally! Hee hee hee!
Positive Thinking
But seriously...
Don't talk to me while I'm trying to count!
You're still not done? Let's go eat! You promised!
That's right...
He may not be demonstrative...
...but he does love me.
He's hard to figure out, but he's kind.
And I know how he feels.
...and sometimes I get down about it...
You're so frickin' annoying!
You're so mean!
...he tries to push me away...
You're such a pest! Go away and quit bothering me!
I've been waiting for two whole hours!
He's always cranky and scowling...

Despite what he said, he gave me a LOT more than one kiss.
Mutsuki?
He doesn't lie, and he doesn't hide things.
DON'T PUSH IT.
OKAY ... ...IF I GET ANOTHER KISS.
JUST WAIT QUIETLY.
OH...
...but sooner or later, I always get my happy ending.
I...
Mutsuki?
Making all these excuses for myself...
What's up?
So what am I doing here?
I can't be alone with you.
Huh?
Huh? Do what?
I'm sorry, Jess! I can't do this!
THUNK
SPLAT

PSHT
Whoa!
Call me if you need anything.
POK
I'm going out, okay? You just make yourself at home.
Make sure you rest up tonight.
Huh? Hey!
Here's a key! Just drop it in the mailbox when you leave tomorrow.
And I really am sorry!
Huh?
Mutsuki?
GNFF

# The Scent of Apple Blossoms

NO ANSWER ...
SHU...
RRRNG
RRRNG
RRRNG

HELLO?
He picked up!
SHU? IT'S ME!
HEY.
WHAT'RE YOU UP TO? CAN YOU TALK NOW?
YEAH. I JUST FINISHED DINNER AND I'M IN MY ROOM.
I SEE. SO... UH...
...I WAS WONDERING IF I COULD COME OVER.
YOU WON'T GET ANYTHING TO EAT HERE. BUT IF YOU'RE OKAY WITH THAT, THEN COME ON OVER.
RIGHT NOW?
IS THAT OKAY?
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT. I WANTED TO BE ALONE WITH YOU AT THE APARTMENT ...
WHERE ARE YOU?
I'M ACTUALLY HEADING THERE NOW.
HEY, HOLD ON...
DRIP
IT'S RAINING!
HOLD ON. I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.
BEEP
Dammit...
DRIP
OOPS!
BRRR
OH!
HE HUNG UP!
He's so rude!
Man, it get cold! I didn't dress warmly enough.

SORRY IT TOOK ME SO LONG. HARUNA GRABBED ME JUST AS I WAS LEAVING.
SHU!
NO, I'M SORRY TO CALL ON SHORT NOTICE.
POP
SPLISH SPLISH
SHAAA
HEH...
I DUNNO.
YOU'RE SOAKING WET.
YOU SHOULD'VE WAITED AT A CORNER STORE OR SOMETHING. WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
YOU'RE CHILLED TO THE BONE.
COME ON UP AND TAKE A BATH.
SHOOF
YOU DUNNO WHAT?

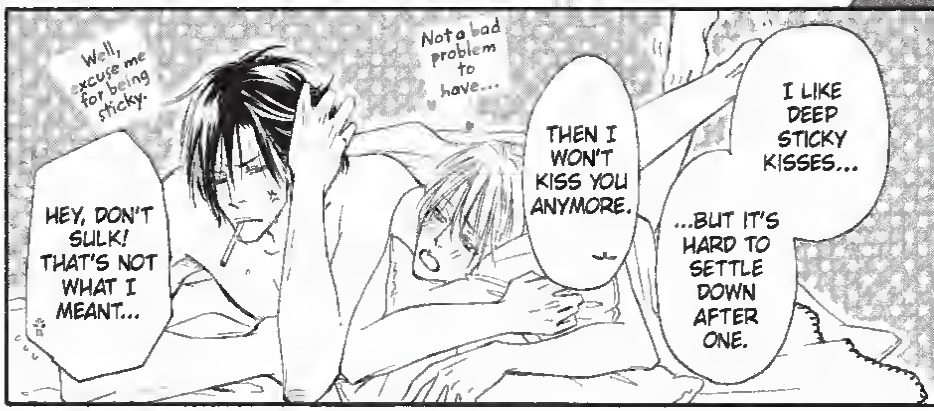
HEY, LISTEN ...
SHU...
SHOO
CLICK
CLACK
WHAT'S THIS? BLACK TEA?
I USUALLY HAVE A SODA AFTER MY BA-
JUST DRINK IT.
DRINK UP.
HE'S LIKE A MOTHER HEN.
SO? WHAT'S UP?
FLUFF
YOU DRIED YOUR HAIR, RIGHT?
YUP.
...
...BUT SOME-THING'S DIFFERENT TONIGHT.
YOU'RE ALWAYS CALLING ME UP FOR NO REASON...
UHH-?
HUH?

I'm such an idiot!!!
...I LOST MY KEYS ON THE WAY TO THE CONVENIENCE STORE...
...AND NOW I CAN'T GET INTO MY APARTMENT.
You big liar!!!
I didn't want ta tell yau because it's so pathetic...
Ha ha ha...
UM...
I've gotta tell him the truth. I'm sure he'll be mad, but still...
WELL...
...YOU SEE...
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WHAT AM I GONNA DO WITH YOU?
I KNOW...
...BUT I THOUGHT IT WAS A GOOD EXCUSE FOR US TO BE ALONE.
WHAT?
YOU SHOULD'VE JUST GONE TO THE BREWERY. SOMEONE'S ALWAYS THERE.
FWUP
CREAK
THUNK

MM...
BUT YOU JUST TOOK A BATH...
LET'S DO IT.
CHU
DON'T BLAME ME IF YOU CATCH A COLD.
Hee hee...
YEAH, I'M ALL WARM NOW. DON'T I FEEL GOOD?
I WON'T.
OKAY?

HAAA...
OH...
HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
EEP
MMM...
ZHF
HFF
CIS
HFF
SHU...
NGN...
OOOH...
GSH
WHAP
WHAP
MM.
NIBBLE

SOFT KISSES WHERE YOU JUST PRESS YOUR LIPS TOGETHER.
HFF
CHK CHK
HUH?
TRY TO LEARN HOW TO DO PLAYFUL KISSES TOO.
HFF
YOU ALWAYS KISS SO DEEPLY.
OH, MAN ...
WHAT THE HELL ARE THOSE?
HFF
DRIP


Well, excuse me for being sticky.
HEY, DON'T SULK! THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT...
Not a bad problem to have...
THEN I WON'T KISS YOU ANYMORE.
I LIKE DEEP STICKY KISSES...
...BUT IT'S HARD TO SETTLE DOWN AFTER ONE.

Ugh, moist.
JUST FINE! IT WAS JUST A SNEE-
ACHOO!
HEY, YOU OKAY?
ACHOO!!
I MEANT... AH... AH...

I WANT TO BE ALONE WITH YOU.
...
WANNA GO BACK TO THE BREWERY?
I DON'T EVEN HAVE A PROPER FUTON HERE.
HUH? NO, I WANNA STAY HERE.
HMPH HMPH
AND HERE.
OKAY, OKAY!
FWUMP
AT LEAST PUT ON SOME CLOTHES.
!
Jeez
ACK!
WHAT IS IT?
HANG ON TO THIS.
GRAB

A KEY? TO THIS APART-MENT?
FOR ME?
JUST SO YOU KNOW, I'M NOT SAYING YOU CAN JUST POP IN WHENEVER YOU WANT.
IT'S FOR TIMES LIKE TODAY.
DON'T LOSE IT. THAT'S MY ONLY SPARE.
CHK
CHK
I...
ARE YOU LISTEN-ING?
...
I NEED TO TELL YOU SOME-THING...
SQUEEZE
HEY, SHU.
I...

HMM ...
CHIP
A FIRE, YOU SAY?
...
I'M SORRY I LIED ABOUT LOSING MY KEY! IT WAS HARD TO TELL YOU ABOUT JESS...
BUT I REALLY, REALLY HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING!
HE JUST NEEDED A PLACE TO STAY OVER-NIGHT.
IT'S NOT ANY-THING--
WELL, YOU DIDN'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE, RIGHT?
HUH?

UNDER THE CIRCUM-STANCES...
...I'M JUST GLAD HE WASN'T HURT OR ANYTHING.
GUH?
UH... IS THAT IT?
YOU'RE NOT... MAD?
EXCUSE ME?
YOU SERIOUSLY THINK I'D WANT YOU TO ABANDON SOMEONE WHO'D JUST ESCAPED A FIRE?
I'M NOT A MONSTER...
CRUSH
YOU TOLD ME THE TRUTH, AND YOU'RE HERE NOW, AREN'T YOU?
YEAH.

BUT...
YIPE!
...YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE GIVEN ME THAT CRAP ABOUT LOSING YOUR KEY.
DON'T LIE ABOUT STUFF LIKE THAT.
FLICK
!!
YEAH. I'M SORRY...
TOMORROW JESS WILL—
Oww...
RUB
RUB
ENOUGH.
THIS CONVER-SATION'S OVER.
OKAY.

CAN I COME OVER THERE?
CAN I GIVE YOU A HUG?
Whew...
CRUSH
OKAY.
YOU DAMN LIAR.
DON'T DO THAT AGAIN.

BIP BIP BIP
BIP BIP BIP BIP BIP
MRRF
MMM? IS IT THAT LATE ALREADY?
BIP BIP
OH CRAP, I GOTTA GET GOING.
5:45
AM
WHUZ-ZAT?
So noisy...
SORRY, DID I WAKE YOU? YOU GO BACK TO SLEEP!
WHERE'RE YOU GOING?
BACK TO MY PLACE.
...WHY?
I HAVE TO GET CHANGED BEFORE WORK.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST FROM HERE? WHY DON'T YOU JUST BORROW A SUIT FROM ME?
NO, I CAN'T. MY BRIEFCASE AND PAPERWORK ARE AT MY PLACE.
But wow, going to work in my boyfriend's suit!
Let's do that next time!
Lend me some clothes, okay?
I'LL CALL A TAXI!
IF I TAKE THE TRAIN, I'LL HAVE TO GO THE LONG WAY.
YAWN
HOW'RE YOU GONNA GET HOME?
WORK?
OH, RIGHT... IT'S A WEEKDAY.
I DON'T CARE. I'M NOT DOING ANYTHING IMPORTANT TODAY.
YEAH, BUT...I MEAN... HE'S AT MY HOUSE NOW...
Umm Umm
SKCH SKCH
WHAT?! ARE YOU SURE?
YOU HAVE WORK TOO, RIGHT?
Haruna-chan will be pissed again!
OKAY, THEN...
I'LL DROP YOU OFF.
Dump? Gee, thanks...
DON'T WORRY. I'LL DUMP YOU AT THE TRAIN STATION.
I'M NOT GONNA GO MEET YOUR EX.

I'm just glad things didn't get awkward!

Hey! Mutsuki?
HEH
OKAY.
He's waiting for you every day.
IN THAT CASE, HOW ABOUT ANOTHER ROUND OF SHOGI WITH GRAMPS?
YOU'RE A LIFESAVER. I'LL PAY YOU BACK SOMEHOW!
RIGHT HERE IS FINE. THANKS!

Huh?
Huh?
I told you yesterday that I was going to Saitama this morning.
J-Jess!
Huh? Why are you...
I thought that was you. Where'd you run off to?
I was worried about you!
(`Д´;)
I... CAN'T... SPEAK!!!

OOF
OOF
All right, already. I'm going.
But before I do...
I got worried over nothing.
So that's your boyfriend?
Admit it, Mutsuki. Last night you left to *get it on.*
It's not like that—
Look, it doesn't matter. You should get going
Take care!
SHOOF
What is this, a road map? Don't you have a train schedule?
I was going to get you to look it up yesterday, but...
...could you tell me how to get there?
This map is really complicated.
We can check my cell...
Oh, right, the battery's dead! if we go back to my place...
Forget it. I'll just ask along the way.
You've got work, right?
Chichipu?
You have to take the local line...I think...
?
I'm lost...
Where IS this?
JAPAN
KANTO area

GRP
SHOOF
VROOM
Yeah, but I'm worried about you.
First thing, find the train!
I'm okay. I'll figure it out.
But...
DO YOU KNOW HOW TO GET HERE?
HUH? THAT MAP'S IN ENGLISH!
SHU!
HEY, CAN YOU HELP ME OUT FOR A SEC?
YOU DUMBASS! WATCH OUT!
THE CAR'S MOVING!
BAM
YEAH, SORRY!
VROOM
THANKS!
MAP
KANTO ROAD M
HOLD ON.
I'LL TAKE A LOOK.

HE'S GOING BY TRAIN?
I GUESS SO.
HE'LL HAVE TO CHANGE TRAINS A FEW TIMES.
AND HE'LL PROBABLY NEED TO TAKE A BUS TOO.
...
I'M SORRY...
WHAT?
I DIDN'T THINK I'D RUN INTO HIM LIKE THIS.
AND ON TOP OF THAT, I HAVE THE NERVE TO ASK YOU TO HELP HIM...
DON'T YOU HAVE WORK? IT'S PAST 7:30 A.M.
WHAT?
OH NO! YOU'RE RIGHT!
CRAP!
YOU GO. I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE.
PAF PAF

Huh?
TELL YOUR FRIEND TO GET IN. I'LL TAKE HIM TO A POINT WHERE HE CAN GET ON THE RIGHT LINE.
...HUH?
He says he'll give you a lift to a spot closer to your route...
...but of course you couldn't impose on...
For real?
That's a big help!
Uh...
He's going for it?
Mutsuki? Did you figure it out?
I have to get going if I'm gonna make it on time.
NO, THAT'S WAY TOO MUCH...
I MEAN, HE COULDN'T POSSIBLY ...
No, uh...

Er...
Uhh
ooo
You sure you don't mind? I won't get in your way?
Hop in.
Uh...
Thanks a lot!

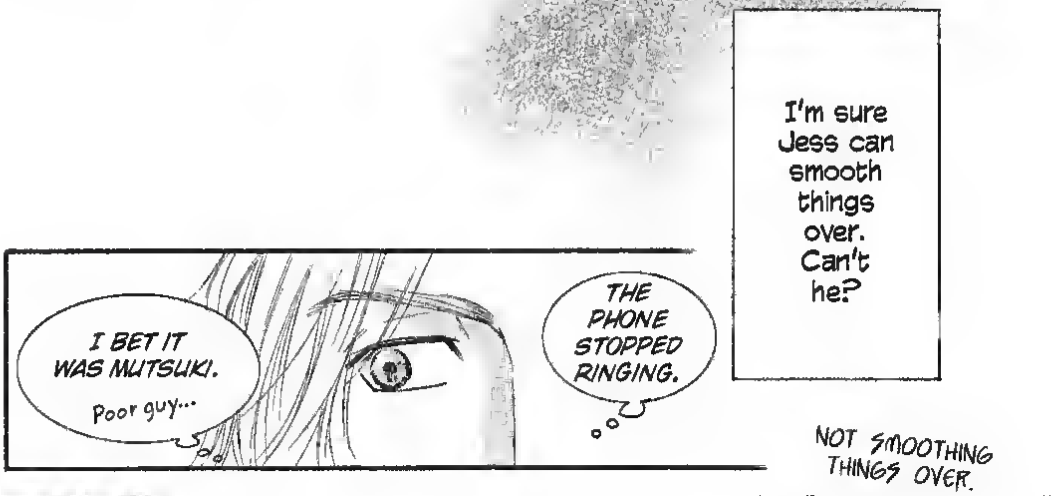
Sure, I'll take him up on the offer.
Your boyfriend seems really nice.
He's nothing like the way you described him!

OOPS...
AH
...self...
Oh, yeah. Take care of your...
Hug!
Thanks for everything, Mutsuki!

HEY!
Yeah, great.
I mean, wait! Jess, I don't think you shou—
Later!
Okay, okay. Jeez...
CRACK
ARRGH!
I should be back here in a week or so.
I'll let you know when I get in.
Ack! Watch it!
...
Hello!
CHAK
...but what just happened?
Excuse me...
TWITCH

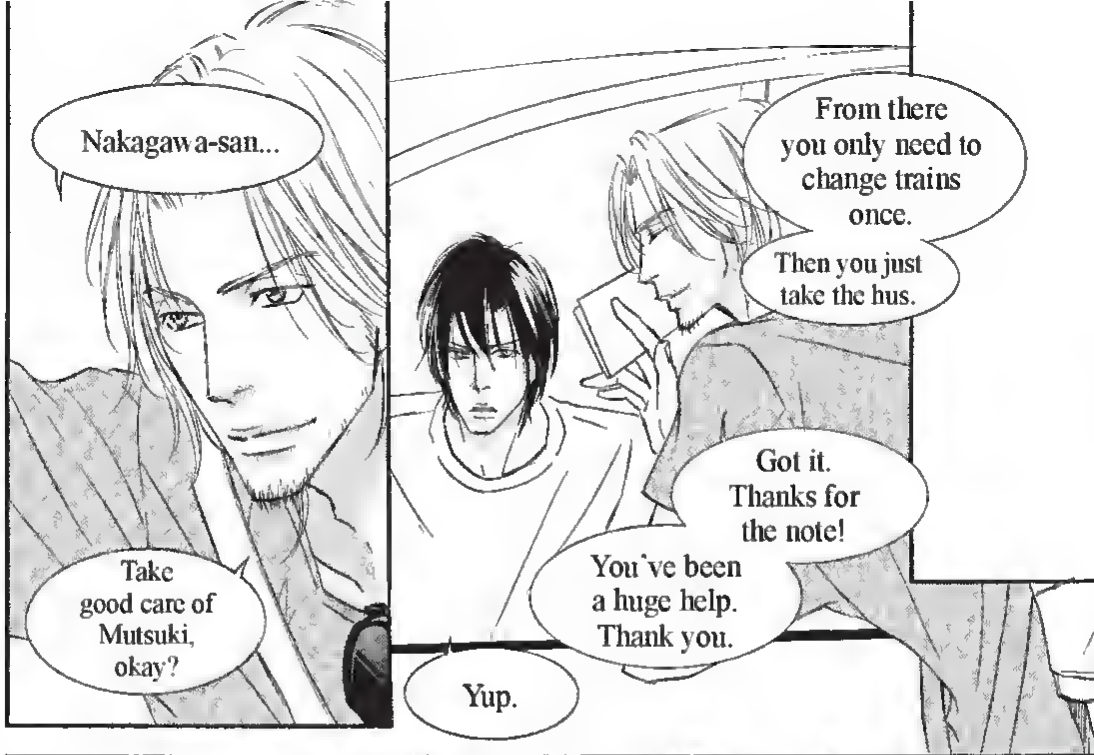
You saved me!
Thanks for giving me a ride!
Sure.
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
Your phone's ringing. Aren't you going to pick it up?

...
ARRGH
ARRGH
RRRNG
COME ON, WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHY ISN'T HE PICKING UP?
PICK UP, SHU!
RRRNG
RRRNG
EEP!
Life as a productive member of society is so hard...
Crap! I'm late for work!

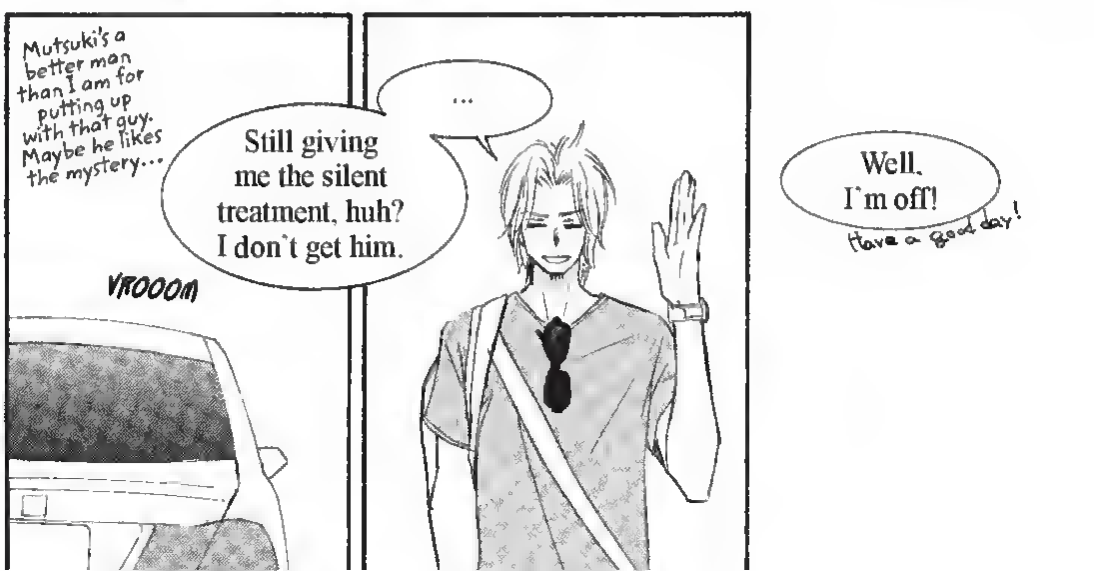

I'm sure Jess can smooth things over. Can't he?
I BET IT WAS MUTSUKI.
Poor guy...
THE PHONE STOPPED RINGING.
NOT SMOOTHING THINGS OVER.

SUDDEN
BOMB SHELL
...
I hear you won't say, "I love you," to Mutsuki.
So, Nakagawa-san.

Mutsuki seemed upset about it.
You should just tell him.
He said Japanese people aren't good at expressing their feelings...
...but the important things really do need to be put into words!
Are you listening?
Am I talking too fast?
?
?
UH...
MUT-SUKI... SEEMED ...
I'm listening.
SHING
"DUNNO"?
HONK
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S GOING THROUGH HIS HEAD.
THAT'S A JAPANESE GUY FOR YOU...
THAT'S ALL HE'S GONNA SAY?
?
Oh yeah?
So how about it?
Dunno.


Nakagawa-san...
Take good care of Mutsuki, okay?
From there you only need to change trains once.
Then you just take the bus.
Got it. Thanks for the note!
You've been a huge help. Thank you.
Yup.

So give him all the love he deserves.
...but I do want him to be happy.
And I don't want to see him sad.
He and I are just friends now...

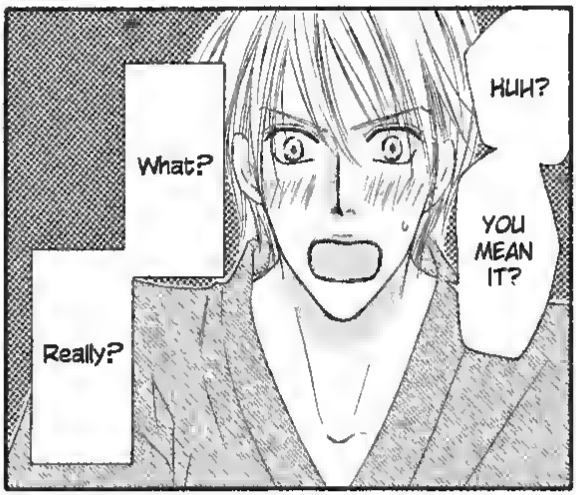

Mutsuki's a better man than I am for putting up with that guy. Maybe he likes the mystery...
Still giving me the silent treatment, huh? I don't get him.
VROOOM
...
Well, I'm off!
Have a good day!

I'd better call Mutsuki.
I bet he's freaking out...
HAHAHA
Mission Complete!
WHIR
I'M REALLY SORRY ABOUT TODAY.
I HAD NO IDEA THINGS WOULD TURN OUT LIKE THAT.
WHIR
WHIR
Man, I'm so hot...
WHIR
WAS IT OKAY?
WAS WHAT OKAY?
I WAS WONDERING IF JESS SAID ANYTHING WEIRD.
OH YEAH?
WHEN HE CALLED ME, HE WAS LIKE, "THAT GUY'S A BLOCK OF GRANITE. IS THAT A SAMURAI THING?"
THE TRUTH IS, HE TALKED SO FAST I COULDN'T FOLLOW HIS ENGLISH.
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
Ha ha! JESS DOES TALK FAST!
ANYWAY, HE GOT THERE SAFELY.
OH YEAH? GREAT.
HE WANTED ME TO THANK YOU.
NO PROBLEM.
He's acting totally normal.
Maybe Jess didn't bother him.

OKAY. IT'S JUST...
WELL, THE WHOLE THING BLINDSIDED ME, AND I WAS HONESTLY FREAKING OUT.
THANKS FOR BEING SO NICE TO JESS.
I WANTED TO THANK YOU FOR TODAY TOO.
CHOK
UM...
I hope that's what's going on.
C'MON. ENOUGH ALREADY.
THANKS...
SHP SHP
IT'S NO BIG DEAL.
IT WAS ON MY WAY.
YEAH, BUT EVEN SO.
BIG BROTHER! HURRY UP AND TAKE YOUR BATH!!!
HEY...
OKAY!

Ha ha ha! I THOUGHT things sounded lively there!
TUB
TUB
TAF
TAF
Yeah, I'll tell him!
Have a safe trip, then!
Good night!
GRP
Oh, he's back. I'm gonna hang up, okay?
Huh? What?
THAT'S ENOUGH GOSSIP.
OH, OKAY!
SORRY.
THAT WAS JESS.
THUP THUP
HE SAID HIS UNCLE IS GOING TO GO SCATTER THE ASHES WITH HIM.
THAT'S A RELIEF.
THAT SO?
HE'S OUT DRINKING WITH THE NEIGHBORS NOW.
Sounded like a party!

I FIGURED AS MUCH... It's a lost cause.
...BUT DO YOU MIND IF I GO?
IT'LL BE MY LAST DINNER WITH JESS, AFTER ALL...
NO WAY AM I DOING THAT.
HOW ABOUT IT?
...WHEN HE GETS BACK, JESS WANTS TO HAVE DINNER ONE LAST TIME. HE INVITED YOU TOO.
OH, ALSO...

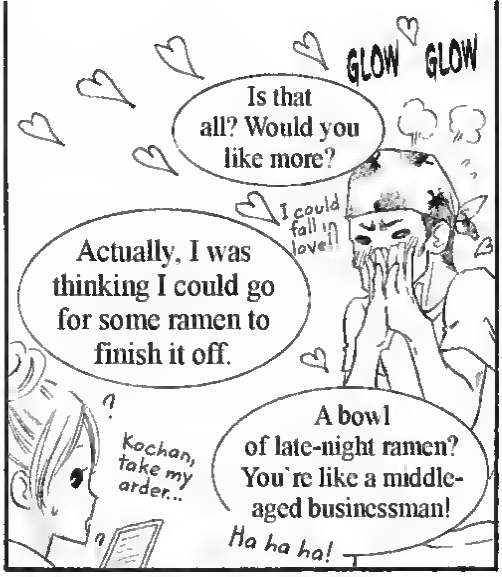


That was kind of anti-climactic...

I WANT YOU TO END IT WITH YOUR EXES. CUT TIES WITH THEM.
END IT.
I'M A DIFFICULT PERSON.
CHMP
Wow.
He warned me that he'd tie me down, but he's been surprisingly easygoing.
I WAS ALL READY FOR HIM TO THROW A FIT.
OKAY.
I expected him to fly into a passion and demand that I stay by his side.
It's almost disap-pointing ...
I'M PRETTY SELFISH, HUH?
HMM?
NEVER MIND.
Oh.
WE'RE GOING TO KOCHAN'S, SO DON'T WORRY.
HMPH ...
YOU CAN JOIN US ANYTIME...
I TOLD YOU, I'M NOT GOING!

BUT SHU SAID IT WAS OKAY!
...YOU'VE GOT SOME NERVE GOING OUT TO DINNER WITH YOUR EX-BOYFRIEND.
EVEN IF IT'S JUST A FAREWELL MEETING...
Kochan's like a big brother to me!
Oh, yeah?
WHEW
LISTEN, YOU.
SIZZLE
BETWEEN THE LINES?
You're like a foreigner that way...
YOU NEED TO BE MORE JAPANESE! LEARN TO READ BETWEEN THE LINES!
SHOOO
IS THAT ALL THERE IS TO IT?
WELL, IF HE'S COOL, I GUESS I'M COOL.
BUT ARE YOU SURE HE'S COMFORTABLE WITH LETTING YOU PARTY ALL NIGHT WITH YOUR EXES?
Thanks♡
Tempura for you. ♡
From me. ♡
THAT SAID, HOT GUYS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME HERE! ♡
You really do pick 'em for their looks, don't you?

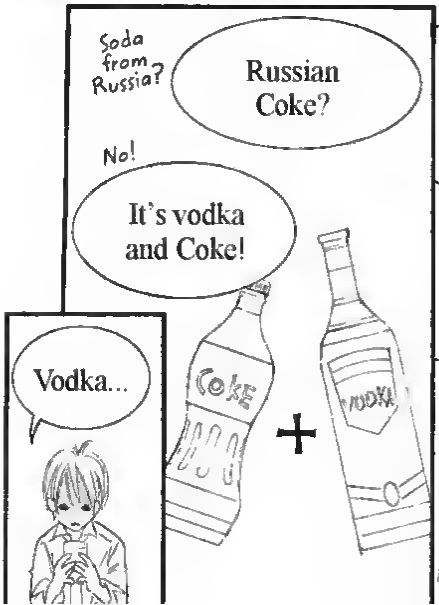
What's up, Mutsuki?
You and the samurai get into a fight because of me?
No, we're getting along fine.
Why do you call him a samurai?
If you say so.
I GOT BULLIED IN SCHOOL BECAUSE I COULDN'T DO THAT.
Japan is a tough place to live.
Between the lines...
I can never read social cues...
So did you scatter the ashes successfully?
Kind of! This guy my uncle knows took us out in his boat...
...but it was so choppy that my uncle threw up!
It was a huge mess!
Ha ha ha!
So anyway, while I was there, I ate—
...
WAH WAH
Man, that was good!


GLOW GLOW
Is that all? Would you like more?
I could fall in love!!
Actually, I was thinking I could go for some ramen to finish it off.
Kochan, take my order...
A bowl of late-night ramen? You're like a middle-aged businessman!
Ha ha ha!

FLUTTER
There he goes again...
THAT WAS DEEELICIOUS, KOTARO-SAN.
I'LL DEFINITELY COME BACK.
OH MY! ♡

GULP
...THIS SODA TASTES WEIRD.
KOCHAN ...

THAT'S OKAY. THERE'S A REALLY GOOD RAMEN PLACE NEARBY. WE CAN GO THERE.
...
Yes!


Soda from Russia?
Russian Coke?
No!
It's vodka and Coke!
Vodka...
COKE
VODKA

Isn't that my Russian Coke?
ARE YOU SURE?
YOU'VE BEEN DRINKING SODAS ALL NIGHT.
OH YEAH.
Sorry.

YEAH, BUT IT'S STILL ALCOHOL.
YOU KNOW HOW LOW MY TOLERANCE IS!
YEAH.
No, not really...
YOU KNOW, IT'S MOSTLY JUST MELTED ICE.
YIKES. ARE YOU OKAY?
OMG!
OH NO!!
I DRANK ALCO-HOL!!
Sorry...
Can't handle booze.
WAH WAH WAH
THWIP!
OWW...
YOU'RE SO CARE-LESS!
...
UH...
SHALL I CALL HIM?
IF YOU'RE WORRIED, DO YOU WANT YOUR BOYFRIEND TO COME AND GET YOU?
HERE, DRINK SOME WATER.
THANKS.
IT WAS MOSTLY WATER, RIGHT?
I'LL BE FINE!
NO. HE'LL GET MAD AT ME...
STOP ACTING LIKE A BABY!

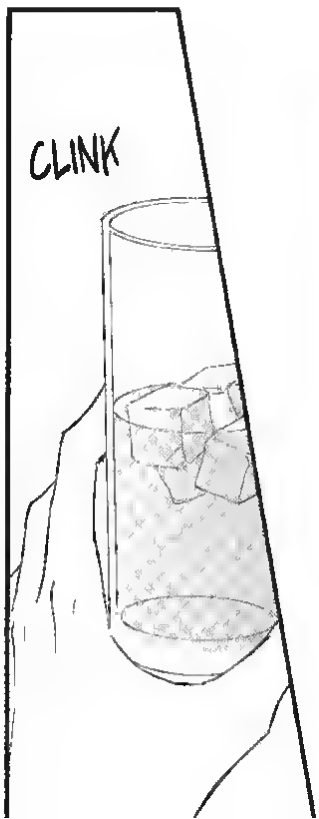
AH
KOCHAN, DO YOU HAVE ANY RAMEN?
Okay...

Hey, should I take you home?
No! I'm fine!
You wanted to go out for ramen...
Don't worry about that!
Just sit tight.

RAMEN?
GET JESS SOME OF THAT.
NO, BUT I CAN MAKE SOBA.

Kochan's going to make you some ramen.
Oh! ♡
Isn't that great?

I THINK I MAY BE A LIIITTLE DIZZY...
Oh no...
NO, NO, I'M JUST IMAGINING IT.
Ha ha...


CLINK

CREAK
OH, IT'S YOU!
WEL-COME!
YOU'RE EARLY TODAY! Is it the power of love?
Hmm? I'm fine.
It's no big de—
Mutsuki, you okay?
!!!
THUNK
Wha...?
Whoa! You okay?
DIZZY
GRIP
Y... yeah...

HEH HEH
SORRY, MUTSUKI-CHAN.
I CALLED HIM BECAUSE I WAS WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
ER, THANKS.
UM...I ACCIDENTLY DRANK SOME SODA THAT HAD ALCOHOL IN IT...
Come on, Mutsuki. You should sit down.
WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO?
HUH?
ARE YOU STAYING HERE?
OR COMING HOME WITH ME?
COMING HOME...

Eat up!
LET ME MAKE IT UP TO YOU.
THANKS, KOTARO-SAN.
YOU'RE SO NICE. I LOVE YOU!
Ahhhhh!
ALWAYS CAUSING TROUBLE, ISN'T HE?
I'M AFRAID YOU'RE LEFT ALONE WITH ME.
IT'S PITCH BLACK.
ISN'T ANYONE HOME?
THEY'RE BOTH AT MY PARENTS' PLACE.
THEY WON'T BE BACK TONIGHT.
I SEE...
So it's just the two of us...
UM... SORRY ABOUT EARLIER.
WHAP
I ACCIDENTLY DRANK SOME OF JESS'S DRIN-

WHAM
YOU'RE SO INCONSIDERATE.
YOU NEVER THINK, DO YOU?
...?
WAH

I TRY TO LET IT SLIDE, BUT EVERY TIME I TAKE MY EYES OFF YOU, SOMETHING LIKE THIS HAPPENS!
AND THEN YOU HAD TO STAY OUT LATE AND GET DRUNK!
DID YOU REALLY THINK IT WOULDN'T BOTHER ME IF YOU WENT OUT WITH HIM?

He looks so...
SH... SHU?
...scary ...
YOU...
But...
I CAN'T TELL YOU... YOU'LL GET MAD.
I'M ALREADY MAD!
HEY!
GSH
WHAT IS IT NOW?
!
ERK
...
IT'S JUST...

...EVEN WHEN YOU'RE ANGRY, YOU LOOK...
...SO SEXY, AND SO HOT...
I SAID I DIDN'T WANNA TELL YOU!
...KIDDING ME?
ARE YOU...
WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH YOU?
OOH...
AH...
NGN...

SLLLP
I...
OOH...
W... WAIT...
SHUT UP.
OOH...
NGN!
DRIP
DRIP
YOU'RE SO SLOPPY...
OOH...
WAIT, WHEN DID YOU COME?
I HAVEN'T EVEN DONE ANYTHING YET.
NGN...
OOOH...
WAIT, I HAVEN'T...
YOU'RE SO CRUEL TO ME...
I'M BEING CRUEL ON PURPOSE.
GSSH

AAH...
LIFT UP YOUR HIPS.
HFF
MMM...
SHU...

SNIFF
SNIFF
...
SNIFF
OH...
WHERE'S HE GOING? I WANNA GO TOO...
UGH, I CAN'T MOVE...
OOH.
A KIMONO?

BRR
!?
SPLASH
HE'S SO HOT... Even from the back...
UGH, I CAN'T MOVE...
I DON'T WANNA BE ALONE...
HUH?
OH...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME...
THAT'S FREEZ-ING!
HEY!
ZHK
COOL OFF.
JUST LEAVE IT.
OKAY...

STROKE
...
I'M SORRY. I REALLY COULDN'T READ THE SITUATION.
I HAD NO IDEA YOU WERE SO UNHAPPY.
YOU NEED TO TELL ME THINGS STRAIGHT OUT.
YOU'RE RIGHT.

SINCE YOU TRY SO HARD TO UNDERSTAND ME.
BUT...
I WANT TO RESPECT YOUR WAY OF THINKING TOO.
AND I...
I HATE NOT BEING IN CONTROL OF MY EMOTIONS.
I GET SO SELFISH AND CHILDISH.
THAT'S NOT IT.
...WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO IT, IF I DON'T LIKE SOMETHING, I DON'T LIKE IT.
I CAN'T JUST SMILE AND LET IT GO.
I'M SO PETTY.

THAT'S WHY I HATE RELATION-SHIPS.
DON'T SAY THAT...
...YOU HATE BEING WITH ME!
YOU KNOW, IT WAS GOOD TO SEE YOU GET ANGRY.
YOU FINALLY LET ME KNOW HOW YOU WERE FEELING.
IT WASN'T A BAD THING.
...
YOU REALLY ARE A MASOCHIST, AREN'T YOU?
SHFF
HEH...
DOES IT HURT?
NOPE!

IS THAT THE CONVER-SATION WE NEED TO BE HAVING RIGHT NOW?
HMMM?
PET
PET
WHAT?
YOU LOOK SO GOOD IN THIS! TOTALLY HOT! ♡
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE YOU IN ONE...
Hee hee ♡
Hee hee ♡
...
I'D RATHER LET YOU KISS ME.
AREN'T YOU GOING TO LET ME APOLOGIZE?

CHU
CHU
MM...
HEH.
WHAT NOW?
HEY, YOU CAN KISS LIKE THIS NOW.
LIKE WHAT?
GENTLE KISSES.
PLAYFUL KISSES.
YOU DOPE.
I'M NOT PLAYING.
I'M ALWAYS SERIOUS.

QUIET, YOU.
COME ON!
IS EVERYTHING JUST A SEDUCTION TECHNIQUE TO YOU?
YOU LOTHARIO!
JEEZ!
...AH...
JUST KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT AND LET YOURSELF BE SEDUCED.

RRRNG♪
RRRNG♪
HEY.
YOUR PHONE'S RINGING.
MM...
MM...

OH, THAT'S RIGHT!
HE'S GOING HOME TODAY!
He told me...
AREN'T YOU GOING TO ANSWER?
IT'S YOUR EX-BOYFRIEND.
Jess
PiPiPi
BAM!!
YOU CAN HANG UP.
IF YOU DON'T WANT ME TO TALK TO HIM, I WON'T.
PiPiPi
UM...
HERE.
?
...
PiPiPi
HMM...
...
PiPiPi

JUST BE YOUR-SELF.
IF I DON'T LIKE SOMETHING, I'LL TELL YOU.
HUH?
HEY!
POK
PICK UP. HE'S YOUR FRIEND, RIGHT?
OKAY!
DON'T STAY ON TOO LONG, THOUGH. COME DOWNSTAIRS WHEN YOU'RE DONE.
GRAMPS AND HARUNA WILL BE BACK SOON.
OKAY!

CHAK
WE'RE HOME!
OH! THESE SHOES...
MUCCHAN, ARE YOU HERE?
YES! I STOPPED BY!
PERFECT TIMING! YOU HAVEN'T EATEN YET, HAVE YOU? I GOT SOME GOOD SOMEN NOODLES, SO LET'S ALL HAVE LUNCH TOGETHER!
BUT FIRST, SHOGI!
YOU CAN PLAY AFTER WE EAT.
JUST ONE GAME!

THE SCENT OF APPLE BLOSSOMS/END

I'M HUNGRY! WANT TO GO OUT FOR DINNER?
SURE.
OKAY, I'LL GET CHANGED.

SHOOF
...
FWIP
WHAT SHOULD WE HAVE?
I WANT KATSU-DON.
OH, OR SOME PORK CURRY!

Oooh!
♥
Did watching me change turn him on?
Take me!
...
SHU...
GRAB
AND THERE'S THAT BRICK OVEN PIZZA PLACE NEAR-
SHU?

LAY OFF THE FRIED FOOD.
And the soda.
YOU'RE GETTING A SPARE TIRE.
What a turn-off.
Hey! Stop squeez-ing it!
SQUISH
SQUISH SQUISH
FLAB
!?